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Germ. madness
Eng. character



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THE DEEPER CAUSES OF THE WAR

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THE DEEPER CAUSES OF THE WAR

BY
EMILE HOVELAQUE

TRANSLATED BY
THE AUTHOR

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
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INTRODUCTION

WHEN I first read these admirable essays of M. Hovelague, I thought them, as I still think them, the truest and most illuminative statement anywhere to be found of the causes which have unchained this tempest of war. A nation, when it is at war, is commonly in no mood to consider the causes of the evil which has befallen it. The wickedness of the adversary is accepted as a sufficient explanation. Everything that lends itself to this explanation is eagerly grasped at, and everything that contradicts or supplements it is impatiently rejected. We feel that there will be time enough to understand our enemy when we have defeated him. Evidence as to character is not taken until sentence has been passed. Yet this impatience of the operations of the sympathetic intelligence has its dangers even in war. Some acquaintance with the beliefs and aspirations of the other party is necessary for a good war, as it is for a good peace. Men are never wholly wicked. We know of the German private soldier (and if we had not known it, the war would have proved it to us) that he

is faithful, brave, devoted, and that though he has only a shadowy notion of what he is fighting against, he knows well what he is fighting for—his home, his kinsmen, and his country. Domestic affection, comradeship, patriotism, self-sacrifice—it is one of the horrors of war that these virtues are so plentiful: I had almost said so cheap—that a whole world of them leaps to answer the first call, and scorns to criticize so sacred an appeal. It is rare, therefore, to find among the nations at war any man who, while passionately devoted to the earth that bred him and the civilization that nurtured him, is able by knowledge and sympathy to project himself into the minds of those who are laying waste his country and destroying his shrines. It is rare; perhaps only in one of all the twelve nations who are now at war can the requisite calm be found. The genius of France, with its deep instinct for truth, justice, and reason, is equal even to this task. M. Hovelague's statement of the historical facts that underlie the present strife, of the beliefs and aspirations of the German people, and of the German estimate of other peoples, is so full and true, that I should not be surprised if large parts of it were accepted by Germany as a convincing summary of her case. Speaking for myself, I can only say that, as I read it, I seem to

fall under the spell, and to be touched by the German madness. If I had no knowledge of England except what may be gathered from books, perhaps I should agree with the Germans in their estimate of the English people. The English have always had a habit of criticizing and condemning themselves. Partly it is playful, a kind of game, to keep the mind supple and healthy. In England only the fools take themselves quite seriously. Partly it is religious—a protest, in the name of the ideal, against things as they are. Now see what happens to these criticisms when they come to the knowledge of a serious-minded people, full of self-esteem. The Germans greedily adopt them all, and, as is natural, add their own critical remarks on our faults. The result is the nightmare which M. Hovelague, quite justly and truly, presents as the German conception of England.

It is not easy to see how Germany is to escape from the entanglement of her delusions. Perhaps already their hold on her begins to weaken. She thought that force, naked force, can do anything; there are signs that she begins uneasily to suspect that there are some things that force cannot do. She believed that men and nations can be frightened into submission; but Belgium and Servia are tortured, and are not afraid. Still she drives

on, to the bitter end. She has successes, and every success is a new failure. Her completest failure, to be bought at an age-long cost of blood and tears that will not bear thinking of, would result from her conquest of all the free peoples of Europe. Then at last she would learn that her strength is misery and weakness, and that her doom is sealed.

The allied peoples who are fighting her have all the happiness that comes to those who fight, not on a calculation of profit but because their souls are free. They do not know how the fortunes of war may turn. But they know that, whatever happens, they will never be the slaves of slaves. This explains what might seem a strange thing : that while the Germans, so far, have had most of the military successes, they are gloomy and depressed, while the soldiers of the Allies are confident and gay. M. Hovelague says nothing of the most wonderful thing revealed by the war—the temper and soul of France. She is saving civilization, and is singing at her work.

This is a Preface, not a criticism, so I will not discuss M. Hovelague's conclusions, with which I wholly agree. I hope that his book will find the attention it deserves.

WALTER RALEIGH.

OXFORD,
April 1916.

PREFACE

IS it possible to realize the full horror of this war and yet speak dispassionately of Germany? Is it not futile to suppose we can relegate to the domain of the intellect alone a phenomenon which stirs the soul to its depths and would seem to demand a very passion of condemnation? How can we hope under the stress of our emotions to retain the power of impartial thought and calm analysis?

And yet we must. We must curb every feeling if we would look with undazzled eyes on the monstrous shape which threatens our very existence and all civilization: thus alone can we attain clear vision of Germany's strength and weakness. Clear-sighted impartiality is of all present duties the most difficult of fulfilment: none is more imperative, for our ignorance of our enemy remains perilously profound. At all costs the scientific attitude must be maintained: moreover it is in keeping with the traditions of a race which in all its ordeals has kept the cool courage of the brain and shown itself capable of detached thought. The cause of

France can be better served by a lucid statement of facts, a sober explanation of the barbarism under which she lies bleeding, than by the most impassioned protests. It is this explanation I have attempted to give in the following pamphlet and the pages which I hope to add. I have asserted nothing which I cannot support by evidence. I have remained impassive in order to induce conviction. I have resisted every temptation to yield to an indignation at times almost uncontrollable in order that the facts and texts of the case should speak alone, for they constitute of all indictments the most crushing. These pages are to a sacred cause the feeble contribution of one who cannot, alas ! serve it otherwise, but would at least wish to believe that in these times he has not remained altogether useless.

So vast and novel a phenomenon cannot be embraced at a single glance. In order to grasp it fully, we must multiply our points of view and approach it from all sides in succession. A preliminary investigation of the origins of the war in the past, and an analysis of the general psychology of Germany reveal a first group of causes, historical and philosophical. A further study is concerned with a second group of causes, psychological in their nature.

They proceed from Germany's illusions about her adversaries, inspired by the theories she has framed on each: the certainty of victory they promised alone gave her the hardihood to attack. My analysis of these theories on the civilization of each of the allied countries tends to elucidate certain recent aspects of German thought and the fundamental conceptions of a Kultur which contests the root-principles of each of these civilizations and asserts its right to replace all. These investigations, the contrast they establish between these fundamental conceptions and those which severally inform the civilizations of France, England, Russia, lead to a conclusion which enables us to determine the significance of this conflict, to see clearly the nature of the spiritual forces engaged, and thus to define the essence of true civilization, which is the sum of contributions from all sides, the ever-changing achievement of all men, and not the appanage of a single race nor the privilege of a single country.

The plan I have followed is thus simple. I realize that the extreme complexity of my subject hardly admits of so simple a treatment, and that the conciseness of these articles, written for the restricted space of a review, may seem artificial and inadequate.

But nevertheless, I have advanced no fact I cannot substantiate, and made no statement that some quotation would not show to be true. All the philosophical ideas I have expounded—need I say?—are not present in every German brain under their metaphysical aspect ; but none have remained inactive, for all are symptoms of a profound though latent mental condition whose action is widespread and various. These philosophical formulæ merely express in a condensed shape, in abstract words, subtle tendencies and vital forces which emerge in impulses and acts as effectually as in systems and abstractions. They are an efflorescence of the living energies of the race, a fateful manifestation of its being ; they were, first, results and intimations, and are now causes.

To state my object more fully : I have attempted to reach in succession the principal causes which have produced the extraordinary phenomenon which is unfolding itself before our eyes. [The first of these lies in the fatalities of formation and development which have predestined Prussia, like a cancerous growth, to spread ever wider and wider her encroaching cells and which condemn her to unceasing aggression or annihilation. These historical fatalities alone explain the characteristics of this latter-day Sparta, who has persistently

based her continuous military preparedness on a minute, intense, and all-absorbing economic preparation for her national industry—War. These alone have led her to assert that force is the sole arbiter of Right—that War is the Judgment of God Himself—that the State is the only “real God upon earth,” the unquestioned master of its subjects, exempt from all scruples, the supreme outcome of the evolution of man, which can recognize no law but its own will to power, no morality but its interests, no gospel but success.

Next I have attempted to show how the idealism and mysticism of Germany, infected by the virus of Prussian success, dazzled by the achievements and promises of Prussian aggressiveness, drunk with the sight of power, brought to the common cause the metaphysical theories on which she founds her monstrous claims to universal oppression and world-dominion. [This metaphysical contribution of Germany is the second determining cause of the war, in nature semi-religious.] Germany has transformed the practice and theories of Prussia and her own theories on the essential superiority of the Germanic race into a blind dogma, a mysticism and a religion : through the preachings of her philosophers, her teachers, her besotted pedants, she

has gradually permeated the innermost cells of every German brain with her deadly faith in the pre-eminence of German Kultur, and finally converted a whole race to the fanatical belief that this war is a supreme duty, a holy crusade, and the domination of the world and all other races a sacred right. From the conviction that the Teuton has an historical mission to fulfil, from his worship of his soil and native gods, of his blood, the only inspirer of the true gospel of life, that of valour, unceasing strife, and effort, from the teachings of Darwin and science which confirm his instincts and justify his philosophy, Germany derives the principles of her action, the direction of her destinies, rights and duties which none can contest without offending the Eternal, without revolting against the predestined order of the Universe. This absolute belief in her superiority, the intoxication of her astounding and giddy fortune, the stifling pressure she fancies that her enemies exert on her, exasperate yet further the consciousness of these rights and duties. It is for her very existence she is struggling, and her existence in her eyes is undistinguishable from that of the Divine on earth: her cause is that of all Humanity. Germany thus adds to the material and moral forces of Prussian militarism and discipline, together with her enormous economical

resources and her unique organizing powers, a fanaticism more menacing than the "colossal" potency of her preparation, than her formidable army, her 17-inch mortars, her giant Zeppelins, which are merely the concrete manifestations of her "will to live" the outward and visible form of the vital energies within, and, as it were, the material emblems of her Faith. Her gross and inhuman militarism cannot be separated from her Kultur, of which it is the final expression and essential form, its dynamic extension into space. Her militarism is, consequently, above all, a *spiritual* force opposed to the spiritual forces of the Allies. It were sheer foolishness to contest the grandeur of a moral force of such intensity, or to attempt to minimize the awfulness of its menace.

But the analysis of these ideas, of the total misconception Germany has shown of the spirit of the Allied nations, enables us to see the fundamental puerility of the theories, both general and individual, which have produced her illusions. However certain Germany was of her superior strength and rights, she was still more certain of the weakness and inferiorities of her enemies. Her miscalculations of their strength constitute a second group of determining causes of the war. It is sufficient

to state them to refute the whole system of ideas on which her Kultur rests and to intimate its inevitable defeat.

I have chosen England as a first example of these superstitions and illusions, because none could more clearly reveal the essential defects of German thought. On England, on the British Empire and the foundations of English civilization, Germany has elaborated a complete and consistent doctrine. She grounds it on her theory of the "Real," which is the metaphysical root of her will and action, her touchstone for establishing the degree of the right to exist all forms of life possess. An analysis of these doctrines and ideas shows the radical incapacity of the German mind to grasp any but material realities: on spiritual realities its geometrical form of thought, its rigid metaphysical reasoning, its mechanical conception of life have no grip, and they elude it utterly. The German mind substitutes for all objects which it contemplates a theory which misrepresents them: the theory and the misrepresentation alone remain in their place. What it can measure and weigh is alone perceived by it: thus it plays on the husk of reality without ever penetrating its essence, on an illusory world of externals that in no manner represents the infinite complexity of inner life.

The England which Germany has conceived and attacks is an illusion and a phantom. The real England, the force of England's unimpaired vital will, escape her totally, and this mistake spells ruin.

On France, on Russia, abstract theories no less consistent, absolute, fallacious, and disastrous have misled Germany. I intend to describe them in turn. Those she has elaborated on the civilization most opposed to her own, and the least intelligible to her, that of France, above all others reveal the essential traits of German psychology. I reserve for this portion of my subject an analysis of certain fundamental features of German thought which throw the clearest light on the soul of Germany and its workings. To define the essence of French civilization is to elucidate the vital differences between the two civilizations which create their permanent opposition in all their manifestations, political, social, æsthetic, philosophical, and human. One is the heir of Greece and Rome, urban in nature, the creation of a social instinct which has ever been fed by Mediterranean traditions and those principles of centralization and civilized intercourse that arise from the life of cities ; the other has ever lacked these principles and traditions ; the inorganic medley of Germanic forest tribes has

known no bond but community of origin, speech, memories, and feelings, and has attained no lasting political or social cohesion.

If this comparative study of the root principles of the opposed civilizations of France and Germany clearly shows Germany's weakness in true civilization, a study of the soul of Russia, which Germany is incapable of understanding, reveals the gaps in her conception of life, the ominous shortcomings in her intellect and the finer feelings of the heart. Modern Germany seems unable to realize the possibility of any relations between man and man except relations of servitude or domination, those of the bully or the bullied. The profound humanity of the Russian, his deep sense of the brotherhood of all men, his child-like outlook upon life, which make Russia the vastest reservoir of spiritual forces in existence—all these things are meaningless and worthless to the German. He has nothing but contempt for a charity and a charm that far surpass all material achievements. He can conceive of no groupings of human beings but those of the factory or the barracks, of masters and servants. A comity of the nations, a human community founded on brotherly equality unconnected with any political system, social hierarchy, or differences of race and nation-

ality, are in his eyes mere words, devoid of meaning, the vain dreams of blind idealists. His Kultur is doomed to perish because it denies the dignity of man, the rights of the weak, the many-sidedness of life, and cannot see that we live not by bread alone.

All these separate investigations lead to one conclusion. It enables us to define the strange soul of Germany, at once so potent and so infirm, so profound and so childish, which alike by its frightful fecundity and its barrenness is a monstrosity. A monster indeed; for Germany within the last fifty years has changed her very nature, has swelled into a deformed and inhuman shape, the Gorgon of our days. She presents a phenomenon so far unknown to history, that of a nation created outright by pedants, and hypnotized by the teachings of *doctores diabolisti*. From their demoniacal suggestions and the teachings of a soulless science, as pregnant with fanaticism as the faith of a Mussulman, she has derived a hideous creed which this war has taught even to those who formerly rejected it with horror. Into the calm realities of our lives she has projected the frightful and bloody dream of a drunken demigod. She has set up her mechanical and narrow ideal against the eternal ideal of man, and claims she can

arrest single-handed the whole course of man's effort throughout the centuries to reach a higher degree of justice, of liberty, of sweetness in life, more abundant love. She is smitten with megalomania and the mania of persecution. Forgetful of all that was her ancient glory, it would seem that, like the lost ones of her legends, she has sold her soul to the Evil One for the kingdom of the earth. The kingdom of the earth eludes her grasp. What, then, will remain to her in the world that will emerge from the ruins and bereavements her insanity has scattered broadcast? What relations can exist between her and the victims of her madness if her madness endures? What barriers can we establish to defend ourselves against a return of a dementia whose convulsions are shaking the foundations of all civilization, and bring back the reign of Chaos? The Germany of Beethoven and Goethe counted no enemy in all the wide world: the Germany of Bismarck and William II "has no friend on earth" (Maximilian Harden). Will the Germany of old be born again? And with what eyes shall we then look upon her? and she on us?

November 1914.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

To seek in recent events alone the origins of the present war were short-sighted indeed. They are neither diplomatic nor political: their magnitude extends far beyond the workings of the opposing interests and principles which would seem to have let it loose: the monstrous conception of civilization which the infatuation of an entire people has transformed into a blind fanaticism and sacred duty to attain the domination of the earth is itself only a secondary cause of the war. Its deep-seated causes lie above all in the remote past of a State and a race, in a philosophy, a mysticism, and a mind which are the offspring of historical predestination and blind hereditary instincts. German science, the economic strength of Germany, all the accumulated forces arrayed against the Allies are merely the bloody handmaidens of a single Idea. And it is this Idea we must clearly define if we would gauge the energies we are combating and the significance of a conflict which is less material than spiritual.

PART I
GERMANY

THE DEEPER CAUSES OF THE WAR

I

PRUSSIA

THE instrument of this idea, the radiating focus of this energy, the force which gives form, cohesion, and organic life to the otherwise shapeless Germanic masses and infuses into them a will to infinite power is Prussia, and the inflexible backbone of her legions, the *anima animans* of her prodigious war machine is the spirit of the Prussian officer. Some of the most distinguished of European historians have described, and none with greater lucidity than Monsieur Lavissee in his admirable "Studies in Prussian History," the pressures of Fate, the struggles and the ordeals which have led to the forging of Prussia and this extraordinary spirit, so dense and hard in temper that its only historical parallel is found in Sparta or Japan. It is still in M. Lavissee's sketch we find the clearest account of a formation and a development unique in European history, yet so definite and simple that they can be stated briefly.

The first characteristic that we note in her history is that Prussia is an artificial creation, a factitious nationality, a thing of shreds and patches with no natural frontiers, or natural bonds of kinship between the mechanically juxtaposed elements that compose it. She is the product and the personal property of unscrupulous chiefs who have built up, maintained, and developed her for aggressive ends, by a tradition of fraud and force inherent in their line.

A strange parallelism runs through the nature and destinies of the two States from which she springs, the Mark of Brandenburg, astride the middle Elbe, and the State of the Knights of the Teutonic Order on the right banks of the Vistula. Each was a German garrison and fortress planted beyond the frontiers of Germany proper, amid the sands and marshes, the lagoons and forests of desolate countries, which were still pagan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; a land where life can only with difficulty grow, and only increases by unceasing struggles and perpetual reinforcements from without. Each was only able to establish itself by exterminating the native race whose place was taken by colonists drawn from Flanders, Holland, and all Germany. Each was like early Rome, a refuge and a crucible in which diverse races

and like energies were fused into the tempered metal of the warrior. Both were purely military States encamped on a hostile soil open to every aggression, and whose safety, exposed to constant threats, could only be maintained by the rigour of their discipline. Each has acquired in its endless conflict against its eastern foe and a niggard soil the virtues of the fighter and the peasant which are its only virtues. And to complete the resemblance, each adopted at almost the same time the same narrow form of Protestantism which still further limited their horizon and hardened their moral fibre. The union, therefore, of the two States in 1618 brought with it no new elements of variation, but a consolidation of their common characteristics, not fresh possibilities of civilization, but an ever narrower predestination. Never did a more rigorous selection or more intense specialization result in a more perfect unity of nature and tendencies. After the fusion of the two States, as before it, the countries which constituted the kernel of Prussia and which contained the germs of its future development remained and will always remain a *Kriegsstaat*, a War State, a *Volk in Waffen*, a nation in arms, threatened by the same dangers, subjected to the same necessities, confined within the same narrow limits of life and growth. No flowering of delicate

or many-hued civilization, instinct with refinement or sweetness, has ever succeeded in opening on her thankless, perilous, and storm-swept soil. The race which drove stubborn roots into it could only extract thence harsh elements of permanence and force.¹ But in those far-distant ages there arose a tradition of inexorable realism, of warlike energy, of patient tenacity, mechanical discipline and obedience, which stamped once for all on this medley of crude and narrow-minded folk the essential characteristics of their physiognomy. The pitiless austerity of her life and her grinding poverty² have been the sources of Prussia's moral wealth, which constitutes her strength and her sole superiority. This unceasing twofold struggle to maintain her material and political existence, the perpetual pressure which has stifled her, the accumulated forces of various disciplines, have gradually welded the formidable instrument of her future greatness, the soul of her nobles and of her peasants, and have spurred her on to the indefinite expansion which is the law and condition of her being.

¹ The Renaissance itself was powerless to humanize the country. In 1500 Abbot Trithemius is scandalized at its *innata rusticitas*, its inborn boorishness; and the Bishop of Magdeburg calls the nobles of the Mark *rebelles, pertinaces, indociles, parvæ intelligentiæ*.

² "The whole wealth of Prussia consists in the labour of man on a thankless soil" (Virchow).

"The constitution of the Prussian monarchy may be said to impose upon it the duty to be ambitious," wrote Talleyrand in 1814. "Prussia ought ever to be on the *qui vive*," said one of her kings; and another: "It is not the destiny of Prussia to slumber in the enjoyment of what she has won. It is only by straining all her intellectual forces, by her seriousness and the sincerity of her religious beliefs, by ever reconciling obedience and liberty, by constant increase of her defensive strength that she can hope to remain powerful: should she forget this, she would lose her position in Europe." William I merely reasserted in these words the eternal obligation to strive which Fate has imposed on Prussia, a fate as pitiless as a natural force and as inevitable. It is this obligation which inspired alike the Ascanian Margraves and the Hohenzollerns. The great Elector, the Drill-Sergeant-King, Frederick II, unconsciously adopt the same means, and pursue the same ends as their unknown or despised predecessors, and the persistence of the same efforts reveals the permanency of like necessities.

War, "the national industry of Prussia," and internal colonization, which created the Mark of Brandenburg and the State of the Teutonic Knights, are in truth from century to century the two chief factors in the growth

of Prussia; and each has furnished the other with the instruments and the means for its perpetual territorial extension. Her military power rests on this broad foundation of systematically developed economic power, on the patient, steadfast, minute organization of all the living forces of industry in view of a single aim, war, on this artificial selection, on this perpetual strengthening of the same characteristics, pursued from generation to generation. Time after time Prussia has been forced to rebuild a structure which internal anarchy, invasion, and recurring visitations had shattered, thus forbidding her ever to relax her effort. In 1640 the Thirty Years War had turned into a wilderness whole regions of the Margraves' domains; out of 330,000 inhabitants, the Mark alone had lost 140,000. The Duchy of Cleves, the Duchy of Prussia, Hither Pomerania, the territories of Magdebourg, Halberstadt, Minden, were not less afflicted: the population of the town of Prenzlau had sunk from 9,000 to 600 souls. On the 9th of February, 1639, its magistrate writes: "Living has become so dear that everywhere are heard the wailings, the cries, the howlings of the famished. They feed on the strangest of foods. They eat dogs and cats, and even appease their hunger in the open street with the bones of the dead; and

—must one speak of such horrors?—famine rages so cruelly that in the rural districts, and even in the towns, men attack one another; the stronger kills the feebler, cooks and eats his flesh.” The first immigrants were pillagers and adventurers left without employment by the Peace; these the Grand Elector called in as a first precious reserve of unused force; then the victims of various religious persecutions, for in Prussia freedom of faith was absolute; and as early as 1685 the Edict of Potsdam, of which five hundred printed copies were distributed in France, appealed to the Huguenots, large gatherings of whom betook themselves to Prussia. The official documents estimate at 20,000, or more than one-tenth of the total population of the Mark, the refugees who settled there. And the work thus initiated was continued under Frederick I; Vaudois, fresh French colonists, refugees from the devastated Palatinate, from Switzerland, from Austria, from Salzburg, from Bohemia, from Silesia, from every quarter, find a home in Prussia. All were given, like the immigrants into America nowadays, the free possession of their lands, certain privileges, and full liberty to worship as they would, security and justice, on the sole condition that they should co-operate in the common task; so that finally, in 1740, out of 2,400,000 inhabitants, Prussia

numbered 600,000 immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Every political mistake committed by neighbouring States, every displacement of population down to Frederick the Great turned to the advantage of Prussia, and fed her with choice elements of warlike, agricultural, or industrial force, contingents of skilled workmen and disciplined citizens; even the blind infatuation of the Sergeant-King, who purchased everywhere for cash the giants of his formidable army, 83,000 men strong, which this State of 2,000,000 inhabitants managed to maintain, helped in the common task. And from the time of Frederick the Great a methodical system of colonization was carried on from village to village, town to town, canton to canton, and province to province: systematic colonization became "a special branch of the Prussian administration to the same extent as the raising of taxes, or of the militia" (Lavissee, p. 265); and Prussia, exhausted by the bloody Seven Years War, was re-stocked with human cattle and the living instruments of production, just as a farmer stocks his farm and works it. And, indeed, never was an industrial organization and management more efficient, never was the subordination of all to the ambitions and aims of a single individual more absolute. All Prussia became a vast machine whose wheels

were adjusted and set whirling by the most powerful constructive genius, the most pitiless exploiter of flesh and blood that the world has ever seen. Never did a miser manage his estates with sterner thrift than did the vast and minute mind of Frederick his domains, nor extract from them a like return. To the cheeseparing economy of the poorest housewife he allied the boundless ambition of the unscrupulous conqueror, who shrinks from no squandering to satisfy his instincts. His heirs inherited from him something more than a mere tool: a doctrine, the clear vision of the resources and destinies of their country, an inspiration and a tradition. His brain and life-work are the living symbol of the hidden creative forces which for centuries had laboured and darkly striven, and at last discover their predestined instrument and their issues. On the road he mapped out for her Prussia has pursued her course unhaltingly, in spite of all appearances to the contrary. Whether they knew it or not, his successors have ever obeyed the sovereign impulse of his spirit, which is the spirit of Prussia and the consciousness of Prussian destinies.

The State thus created by him and yet more by the joint action of circumstances, historical, geographical, and social, which have given it a character apart in Europe, ever remained

faithful to the form and the direction which its past and the greatest of its kings have impressed upon it. Half modern, half feudal, the Prussia of our study is not like its neighbours, a simple geographical expression dissimulating centrifugal forces. In spite of the diversity of elements which constitute her, she is one and indivisible; her centralization is complete. This cohesion and unity, the artificial result of persistent and age-long efforts, render her an incomparable instrument of action at the service of the autocratic will which alone wields it. Wholly subjected from generation to generation to the sternest and most rigid military discipline, the country is one in heart and soul; it knows no impulse but that of the chief who is its living incarnation. It is truly a State in every sense of the word.

And this is the second essential feature of its history. From its very origin, and not only from the time of Frederick II, Prussia has been a "State": "All the portions of the Prussian State, however scattered, were from an early date united in a community with general interests: the chief exercised sovereignty, not as lord of the territory, but as the trustee of the public power" (Lavissee, p. 2). Thereby Prussia is distinguished from the other Teutonic Mark against the Slav, from the other

fortress against the East, Austria, and from all feudal Europe in which the abstract idea of public power never succeeded in emerging from the confused rights of individual fiefs nor in overcoming their anarchy. The institutions of Prussia have always been a thing apart in Europe. They preserve a memory of their remote origin in the military States from which Prussia sprang ; and throughout all the changes they have undergone, under the action of time and circumstances, they have preserved or renewed their essential characteristics. They do not owe their birth to the spontaneous groupings of tribes or peoples ; still less are they the result of an agreement between a barbaric chieftain and his companions in arms who each share in some common spoil, according to their rank and services. The distance that separated the Margrave from his vassals, the knights from their villains, was too great. These institutions were imposed by the absolute will of religious, military, and patriarchal chiefs on individuals uprooted from their own country and destitute of personal or collective rights, on a many-coloured mosaic-like horde with no natural cohesion ; or else later they are reborn once more as absolute as before, under the stress of unvarying necessity or of remorseless conditions of existence which

throughout the dynasties and the ages impress on them the same autocratic character. As heirs of the Grand Masters of the Order and of the Margraves, the Hohenzollerns re-established the autocracy of old times amid the anarchy of the lands they inherited. Like their predecessors, they constituted themselves the spiritual fathers and military chiefs of their subjects. Like them, they were the absolute masters of their bishops, their nobles, their burgesses, and their peasants, their supreme judges, as were their predecessors when they founded beyond the limits of the Empire and of Christianity their absolute power over the floating population they drew around them and within the uncertain limits of their sway.

The relations between these chiefs and their subjects were from the outset personal and direct. There was no complicated feudal hierarchy to dissipate or endanger their authority, no right in power or time superior to theirs. No appeal existed. The "clerk" who served as intermediary in the Middle Ages between the Margraves and their subjects had no hereditary title, nor even a title for life. He was displaced, replaced, or cashiered at will. This tradition of patriarchal autocracy at times underwent eclipses, but always revived; and many of the traits of the authority

of the early Margraves of Brandenburg are to be found in the electors and the kings who succeed them. Their government is immediate, whether in the case of the puny States they originally held or the vast possessions they acquired, and the formidable administration and bureaucracy these finally exact. The Prussian rulers govern in person and exercise a perpetual oversight and interference: their belief in their capacity for thus ruling is absolute, even when unjustified, from the Margraves down to Frederick the Great and William II, who must needs meddle with everything. And to the service of this artificial State, which resembles rather a garrison or a regiment than the neighbouring States, a machine rather than a living organism, which has no history but that of its formation and its chiefs, electors and kings alike subordinate themselves, as they subordinate to it all the living forces, religious, economic, and social, of which they dispose absolutely. They are merely the foremost servants of a State which is their handiwork and the property of their race. "I am the Minister of War and the Finance Minister of the King of Prussia," said Frederick William I. *Ich dien* is the motto of the autocrat Frederick the Great. There is not a Hohenzollern, however weak or powerful, who is not in-

spired with this mystical conception of the ideal King of Prussia, the living incarnation of the undying State and as enduring as it. And from the days of Iena on, every German shares in this conception, and sees in this King and this country the predestined instrument, not only of the salvation of Prussia but of German liberation. The Prussia of Frederick II was swept away by the Napoleonic whirlwind. In the feeble hands of his successors the formidable machinery of its institutions and its administration became a short-sighted and ineffective bureaucracy. His army, ruled by the academic conceptions of purblind pedantry, was no longer fit for anything but to parade and break in defeat. His life-work seemed doomed to destruction; the destinies of Prussia seemed irretrievably compromised. But out of the very excess of disorganization and misfortune came salvation. The country had suffered too perilously from the Napoleonic wars; too many interests were bound up in the preservation of the kingdom; its existence was too essential to Germany and Europe. Others took in hand the unending task; other brains were inspired with the dream of its destinies and enlarged their scope. Once more did Prussia extract fresh strength from the ever flowing fountain that renews her life and her

greatness, war and the importation of human values. Another form of colonization, voluntary and spontaneous, brought to the only State that Germany knew the capacity and power for construction it no longer possessed. From every side the artisans of its renewal hastened to their task. Stein from Nassau, Hardenburg and Scharnhorst from Hanover, Gneisenau from Saxony, Blücher from Mecklenberg, laboured together towards the sacred end, with others who came of their own free will from all parts of Germany. Boundless hopes swelled their hearts. By strengthening the threefold discipline of the past, intellectual, administrative, and military, through the action of the schools, the bureaucracy, and the army, they rebuilt the country, and, on behalf of their common King, reconstructed the State, the absolute master of its subjects, and drilled for its service the docile generations which only exist to serve. Their combined efforts fashioned a new Prussia, stronger than ever, and fed now, not merely by artificial contributions but by all the blood of Germany, which her roots draw from every soil; and with it come new sentiments, new ideas, and patriotic aspirations and dreams which far exceed her narrow and selfish nationalism. The University of Berlin was founded, an "intellectual bodyguard for the Hohenzollerns, quartered [*cinquartiert*]

under the shadow of the palace of the Kings of Prussia" (Du Bois-Reymond, in his speech of the 5th August, 1870), and for the first time the intellectual forces of Germany were enrolled in their service. A final alliance was concluded between the spirit of Germany and the brute force of Prussia, the former subordinate to the latter and the humble servant of its designs; between the unanimous aspiration towards unity born of the war and the hereditary soldiers who alone could realize it. Germany, dazzled by Prussian successes, became a wider Prussia, trained like her to mechanical and passive obedience, and, like her, wholly directed towards material ends and a brutal and unscrupulous realism. She adopts as her motto the cynical phrase of Frederick II, "When one succeeds one is never in the wrong." And this gospel of success at any price, this idolatry of might, becomes her religion. The irresistible contagion gains the entire nation and hideously transforms it into a beast of prey. The formidable artificial machine utilized by Bismarck and the Empire finally shapes itself under the action of the artisans of this transformation and their successors. Their efforts reinforce the efforts, whether unknown or forgotten, but analogous, which throughout the centuries had converged with

growing force to let automatically loose the latent potencies of its mechanical structure, and to spread the same doctrines of violence whose only outcome is efficient war. Modern science has added a last perfection to the fabric, and the machine is now complete. The instrument which the ages and dynasties and individual devotion had gradually fashioned in view of perfect organization and material dominion, and these alone, was ready for use.

II

THEORY OF THE RACE

THE idea destined to use the instrument for its appointed task had long before arisen and grown in strength. Its nature is mystical and was not born of Prussia. The mystical conception of the ideal and eternal King of Prussia is the only mysticism to be found in the pitiless and matter-of-fact Prussian spirit. The latter never toiled for any ends save its own greatness. It has lived on Germany and not for her, for its own selfish purposes, and not, as German historians would have us believe, for some holy and mysterious Teutonic mission to which it was predestined by the God of Germany.

The inspiration of a providential mission other than its own aggrandizement came to it from without. (Germany, mother of philosophies and mysticisms, begot the theories of German unity, of conquest, of German domination of the earth, of the infinite superiority of the Teutonic blood, and of the

duties and monstrous rights which this superiority confers. From the marriage between her spirit and the Prussian instinct for rapine arose the inhuman doctrine of the State divinely chosen by the God of Force who rules the world. This conception of the State as superior to all morality and all prejudices was doubtless always steadfastly followed by Prussia, and Prussia provided the model for it; but unaided she would have been powerless to formulate it with such a blind rigour of scholastic logic, or establish it as an absolute philosophical principle. Prussia has no inklings of the Universal. Her domain is the earth and not the air. The rude artisans of Prussian military power forged for other ends the instrument which is utilized to-day by the theorists of Teutonic culture, the fanatics of a new religion. The intoxication of these idealists would have inspired only with contempt and disgust those stern realists Frederick II, William I, Bismarck and Moltke; for these idealists transform into drunken dreams—" *Wind und blauer Dunst* " the Drill-Sergeant-King would have said—the century-old structure they founded on realities and not on clouds, and bring it crashing to the ground.

Nothing is more certain than that a deadly germ of indefinite expansion and growth,

monstrous, menacing, and intolerable, was contained in the Prussia which the law of her nature condemned to perpetual growth; and that her successes and her example were the first influences to contaminate Germany. But it was idealistic Germany, utterly alien in mind, in past, and spirit, which distilled and poured into the veins of the Prussian barbarian the intoxicating philtre whose madness is hurrying them both to destruction.

Truly a strange alliance, and such as no one could have foreseen in the eighteenth century. Between Prussia, which is scarcely German, and Germany, the differences of nature and soul, of past vicissitudes and future destinies, are indeed so great that many German historians have denied the possibility of any fruitful union between them. The half-barbarous Junker is the result of a selection and warlike training prolonged through eight centuries. Bred like a thoroughbred by continual crossings between those of his own kind, specialized to become an instrument of destruction, and, like all instruments of destruction, unfitted for any other usage, it would seem that no common measure or common understanding could exist between so short-sighted a realist, inspired by the narrowest nationalism that ever existed, and the vast spirit of a Goethe or a Herder, lovers of the ideal and cosmo-

politans. What secret influences have thus transformed peaceful, idyllic, philosophical Germany, whose ideal was culture and not patriotism, humanity and cosmopolitanism, not nationalism, whose domain was ideas and not dominion over the world? By what miracle has the sentimental German housewife been transfigured into a Bellona drunk with the lust of material power and slaughter? When his country was fighting for its very existence, Goethe was engaged in writing the "Divan," and his thought sought refuge in the enchanted gardens of Persia, the luxurious dreams and ecstasies of Saadi and Hafiz. Yet earlier Lessing declared that patriotism is merely an heroic weakness of which he is happy to be rid; and Jacobi exclaimed, "I hear every one talking about 'Germans.' What *is* a German? I attempt in vain to attach some meaning to the word"; and such blasphemy scandalizes no one. If we consider the distance covered between yesterday and to-day we can gauge the change in Germany, and the depth of the gulf that separates the two Germanies.

And yet it was these very idealists, these sentimentalists and thinkers, these humanists and philosophers, who gradually, unconsciously at first and by devious ways and imperceptible degrees, created the very Germany they themselves would disavow. They begot her

spiritually, as the Hohenzollerns begot Prussia materially, and by a process of creation scarcely less artificial.

The steps in this creation are easily traced.

First of all we find the fruitful idea of their race as set forth by these historians and philosophers, as well as the historic rôle of Germany, the providential mission of the Teuton in the world. To their downtrodden and humiliated fellow-countrymen they preached a gospel of consolation and pride. And never was audience better prepared to listen to it in all eagerness.

1. *The Historic Mission of the Teuton.*

Each nation has a clear conception of its historical importance, and seldom does its importance appear to it mediocre or the conception err on the side of modesty. But with some, the Israelites, for example, imperialistic England, Germany, modern Greece, the remembrance of the mighty deeds of their ancestors, of their spiritual or civilizing influence, of the dominion exercised by the soul, the mind, or the vital energy of the race, the consciousness of their duties and their destiny, in short, of their mission, have so profoundly penetrated the innermost cells of the nation or race that they have become one of the forces that determine its growth,

one of the most potent inspirations of its acts and thoughts. This is, above all, true in moments of intense national life, when suffering, defeat, or victory uplift the soul of a people, and rouse it to a fuller realization of its being, and impel it to seek in the past or the future comfort or revenge, motives for hope or action, for conquest or resistance.

And thus was it with Germany, divided and humiliated, exposed to unceasing anarchy within and ceaseless invasion from without, haunted for a thousand years by the ever unfulfilled dream of unity and dominion, conscious of her fundamental unity even in the wretched dispersion of her forces into a mere dust of helpless little States. Long had the separate limbs of her vast vague and mutilated body obscurely striven to reunite in one coherent whole, one single nation. And long before these fragments had been welded together by blood and iron in 1870, the fervent effort of her poets, historians, philosophers, critics, and scholars had in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries patiently pieced together—or rather created bodily—a national consciousness from the scattered remains of her old legends, the traditions, the memories of her former Emperors, the Ottonides, the Hohenstaufen, who carried to such dizzy heights the power of their race ;

and had awakened the confused Germanic aspirations, and rediscovered the title-deeds of German nobility. The ideal creation preceded the living reality of to-day, and united Germany, the greater Germany, existed in the dreams and aspirations of her sons, was born of their desire long before it was realized by the sword. Between the three principal manifestations of the Teutonic spirit—the invasions of the barbarians, the Reformation, and later on the war of 1870—these dreamers discovered a mystic link, a profound unity which revealed the mission of Germany, an almost Divine mission of purification and regeneration, clearly visible from the day the Teutons appear in history. The religion of their past and of their blood was born, and that worship of their ancestors which gives reality and life to all the chiefs of their race, and makes their far-off Arminius closer to their hearts to-day than Vercingétorix to ours; for this first of the German Hermanns is a national hero more illustrious and more significant than ours, and far more potently the inspirer of valour and enthusiasm. The conqueror of the legions of Varus is the first incarnation of that spirit of German independence and pride, of voluntary subordination to one's chosen chief, not of passive obedience to some imposed master, of free and not slavish submission, of frank fidelity

and brotherly equality which, some centuries later, purified the earth, sick with the corruption of Rome, regenerated the troops of serfs she crushed beneath her yoke, and erected on the ruins of antiquity the world of feudalism and chivalry.

From the sombre depths of the Germanic forests the chosen blood flowed in purifying streams, bearing feelings unknown to the ancient world, the sense of honour, the respect for woman, loyalty to one's plighted word and one's chosen leader. The torrent thus let loose quickly found its natural channels and outlets. From the days of the earliest invasions the hordes of needy barbarians have rushed unceasingly towards the wealthy civilizations of older lands, from the dark regions of the North to the South, to the homes of sunlight, luxury, and beauty. And the ancient struggle between the North and the South endures yet: Arminius and the barbarian chiefs are merely, in the eyes of these theorists, the first of a long line of conquerors in the endless conflict between the Teuton and the Roman, between the spirit of free inquiry and the principle of authority, between simple, stern, and taciturn Germany, rich in all domestic virtues, and Rome and the sons of Rome; between the *Deutsche Treue* and the deep, the ingrained immorality of the Latin.

And the hero who determined for all time the destiny of his race and pointed out its path and the mission of purification it was to accomplish is something more than a leader—he is a symbol and an inspiration.¹ The Teuton is the soldier of God in this philosophy of history; and whenever a superhuman task discourages the heart of man, God confides it to a German. His was the stormy power that sent the monstrous Roman Empire crashing to its foundations; he it was who swept away all the accumulated filth of a decaying world, of a society which was dying of its vices. And when, a thousand years later, the hour had come to cleanse that other sink of iniquity, the Roman Church (thus speak they), that had inherited together with Rome's dream of universal dominion and tyranny over all human minds, all Rome's vices of mind and heart; when again the hour struck that doomed to expiation frivolous France, drunk with her warlike pride and carnal sins, Germany was again ready to lend the Eternal God a helping hand. The predestined instrument of these Divine chastenings is a German, because his heroic and unsullied force alone can accom-

¹ In 1870 the German soldiers marched to the national hymn "Der Gott der Eisen wachen liess," which says "We are out to fight the battle of Hermann and to avenge ourselves."

plish the mighty task, and his virgin blood alone can regenerate weak and corrupt races : Luther is the heir of the far-off barbarian invaders, and Bismarck of Luther. If in 1870 all Germany hurled itself on France, it was not merely a political quarrel which flung the German masses on us, nor the hope of unity, nor the dream of dominion alone ; the great tidal wave of feelings, hatreds, aspirations which swept them on poured from the remotest recesses of their history, from the memory and instincts of the race : its impact was less the shock of two conflicting ambitions and two adverse peoples than the culminating moment in a struggle that had lasted more than two thousand years, one among all the battles in an endless war between two incommunicable spirits, between two mutually exclusive ideals, the Latin and the Germanic, which in the course of the ages have crystallized into certain beliefs, social and political institutions, actions and dreams, æsthetic and philosophical theories in essence contradictory and irreconcilable.

In 1914, after the victories of 1870, after forty-four years of intoxicating prosperity, of uncontested hegemony, of incessant preaching of these ideas, is it imaginable that Germany, now entirely Prussianized, should be subjected to impulses less forceful, that this great wave

of hereditary aspirations should have less impetus, and that her faith in her mission and her star should have diminished?

2. *The Pantheism of the Teuton. His worship of his Native Gods and of Valour. His Conception of Life.*

Side by side with these teachings and these reconstructive efforts another creative movement was at work, more potent still, even if its effects have been slower to emerge. Its influences sink deeper and stir the very soul of the race, its very essence; and on more substantial foundations than a fatuous interpretation of history, on the basal and characteristic feelings of the Teuton, on his spirit and its unchanging reactions, it has erected new proofs of the essential unity of the Teutonic race, of its originality, its infinite superiority, its mission.

While these historians and critics were engaged in establishing the titles to nobility of the Germans and their position in history, others—poets, philosophers, scholars, and musicians—rediscovered the gods of the German soil, exalted its mythical heroes and the religion of natural forces which the age-long delusions of Christianity had been impotent to destroy, a world of feelings so profound, so passionate, and widespread in Germany that they seem to be an emanation of its soil and the con-

sciousness of its secret life. The soul of the German is linked by a thousand subtle ties to his native earth, the creator of his living gods ; and alone to-day in Europe he possesses a mythology and a mysticism that inspire his actions. Essentially he is a pantheist and a mystic. In all things he discovers Life and in all a Spirit. For him it is beneath outward phenomena that the true realities lie hid ; for him life is a mystery and a miracle, all is fateful and Divine, all is a symbol and a dream ; for him a common soul allied to his own informs all things and reveals itself to his eye, which alone sees to-day, to his ear, which alone to-day hears ; for him the earth, the clouds, water, fire, the wind, the trees, the beasts of the field share in the universal dream, speak a tongue most plain to the children of Nature, who like himself have remained close to the bosom of the Great Mother and commune with her. This profound Germanic Pantheism and the feelings akin to it have maintained their sway from the days of the remote primitive legends down to the dramas of Wagner. It is the common heritage of the whole race ; it constitutes its glorious title-deeds and the proof of its superiority. The manifestations of this spirit extend from the fairy tale to the most abstruse philosophy, from the barbarous myth and the

folk-song to the loftiest and most subtle metaphysical poetry, from the humble marvel children rejoice in up to the sublime vision of Goethe's Prologue in Heaven. And thus all alike, from the peasant to the scholar, the men, women, and children of Germany without exception, each according to his capacity, share in a treasure common to all, and which Germany alone possesses to-day. For the soul of the Teuton is infinitely more childlike, primitive, and closer to its origins and to Nature than our soul. For ages it has listened to the murmurs of the wind, the whisperings of the forest instinct with obscure forms of life ; simple and profound, it has peopled darkness and space, the waters and the earth, with haunting presences and magic influences, with fantastic, crafty, malicious, hostile, or friendly creatures, and dreamed the Great Beast Epic. Not in vain has the Teuton remained for so many centuries isolated amid his marshes, his forests, and his winters ; in his earnest soul stirs darkly the memory of the long solitary days and nights during which it listened to the voices of Nature, that speak not in our towns, to the utterances of a heart communing with itself, that eagerly questions Fate and pursues in silence its passionate dialogue with the Invisible which Death alone can interrupt. The Northerner will always appear dull and awkward

to his older brethren of the South, and his speech in comparison with theirs will often seem the confused and diffuse stammerings of a barbarian. But at times he lights upon words beside which all others appear frivolous. And throughout all, the deep religious earnestness, the profoundly human note that occasionally breaks through his speech, his haunting sense of the mysterious, his communion with the soil and all Nature, his feeling that he is suffused by the very soul of the eternal forces that create life and from them receives Divine intimations, his belief that his direct intuition is a truer light than the deceitful clearness of that Reason on which the Latin prides himself, together with the conviction that the Will and Spirit of the earth—of his earth—through him find consciousness and utterance—all this necessarily appears to him to be a nobility withheld from other races and higher in degree than any they possess. And thus his mysticism, in which is interwoven so strong a strain of pride and national vanity, has become a form of patriotism. *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*: his is a sacred land, exalted above all other lands; its streams and its forests, its songs, its music, and its soul are his, and his alone. Where can their like be found? 'Tis for him the Rhine flows; the Rhine, the German Rhine, is a god to-day as it was two

thousand years ago : Treitschke could not leave it without shedding tears. " To-morrow," he writes to a friend, " I shall see the Rhine for the last time. The remembrance of that noble river will maintain the purity of my heart and preserve me from evil and sorrowful thoughts till the end of my days." One can hardly image a Frenchman using such expressions at the sight of the Seine or the Garonne, or an Englishman at the sight of the Thames. Such words reveal the passionate love of the German for everything that is German ; they gush from his remotest past and the well-springs of his being. Truly for the Teuton his land is Divine, and on him descends a portion of its divinity to glorify him. Alone among the children of men he draws, as he did two thousand years ago, from his soil and native gods the unchanging sources of his strength and of his thoughts, his inspiration and his destiny. His ancestral gods alone are living yet. In the midst of races forgetful of their ancestors and spontaneous cults, he alone does not live on borrowed beliefs, and his religion is the offspring of his blood. His present is a product and continuation of his past. *Der alte, der deutsche Gott*, Odin, God of Battles, yet rules his fate : like Odin, he yet listens to the uncertain utterances of Erda, broken by dreams and silences :

the heroes of his mythology and barbarous history yet inspire his conception of life, which to be noble must be perilous, a strife and a struggle. "Why are you for ever fighting?" Julian the Apostate asked the chief of a German tribe on the Rhine. "Because there is no greater happiness in life," replied the latter. And in this reply the Teuton recognizes more than a mere barbaric love of rapine; here speak his blood and a philosophy of life which alone creates and maintains strength, and confers on man true nobility and exalts him above his fellow-men. To strive is his destiny, and his mission is War. The heroic spirit that breathes in the Eddas, the blood-stained poetry of the Nibelungenlied, the rhapsodies of Nietzsche, the eternal fighting instinct of the barbaric chief, the feudal baron, the freebooters and kings who by war, and war alone, have given to Germany its place in the world, action and dreams alike spring from the same obscure force which is the Will of the Universe. Effort, incessant and heroic effort, is the law of God, and its acceptance stamps the nobler races; they degenerate when they cease to hear, cease to listen to the ruthless behest which is the Voice of eternal Necessity. In this Religion of Valour which grows out of the early theories of German historians and phil-

osophers, the mission of the Teuton is not only one of regeneration ; it is not merely a duty towards others, towards one's self and God ; it not only aims at conquest : it is an end in itself, like the Japanese Bushido, " the Way " of the Samourai, a discipline disinterested as well as egoistical and aggressive. It creates the kingdom of the Strong, the masters of the earth, and its ethics are not those of Christ but those of Odin. The morality of the slave cannot bind it. It knows no other law than the impulse of a will to power, an heroic exultation, contempt for security and death, *amor fati*, the acceptance or rather the joyous pursuit of every form of fate, whether defeat or victory, death or life, for all are alike but moments and phases in the never-ending strife.

Ye have heard it said of old, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth ; but I say unto you, Blessed are the valiant, for they shall make the earth their throne ; and ye have heard men say, Blessed are the poor in spirit ; but I say to you, Blessed are the mighty and free in spirit, for they shall enter Valhalla. And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the peacemakers, but I say unto you, Blessed are those who make war, for they shall be called, not the children of Jahvé, but the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahvé.

Every aspiration towards a state of equilibrium and repose is a form of degeneration.

Ye shall seek your foe (saith Zarathustra), ye shall fight your fight, ye shall do battle for your ideas, and if your idea is vanquished your loyalty shall rejoice in its defeat.

60 THE DEEPER CAUSES OF THE WAR

War is the natural state of the noble soul.

Ye shall love peace as a means for new wars, and a short peace better than a long one.

I do not counsel you work but conflict. I do not counsel you peace but victory. Let your work be a conflict, your peace a victory.

A good cause, you say, hallows even war. But I say unto you, a good war hallows everything.

Courage is the supreme virtue. There are no worse vices than pity and weakness.

War and courage have done greater things than the love of one's neighbour. It is not your pity but your valour which has hitherto saved the victims.

What is right? you ask. To be brave is to be right. What is length of days? What warrior would be spared?

Behold the new law, my brethren, that I lay down for you! Be pitiless.

Who shall attain to anything great who does not feel the power and the will to inflict great sufferings?

This revelation is not merely a mysticism. This poetry and philosophy take a concrete and scientific form for the modern man. Darwin teaches the same gospel as Siegfried or Arminius: its inspiration is drawn no less from the stress of commercial expansion than from the example of Prussian successes or Nietzsche's lyrical outbursts. There is not a clerk in Germany who does not hold the faith. "War is the mother of all things," said Heraclitus; and in turn modern science

repeats the same axiom. It is the life-force, a biological necessity; Treitschke and Thucydides alike look upon it as the stern master who teaches the supreme lesson of life, the βίαιος διδάσκαλος. And for the Germans to-day, as for Mohammed and the Arabs of old, it is more than a mere heroism; it is the act Divine and will of God upon earth (and by God understand the eternal force which wills life). Every year Germany prints nearly seven hundred books which take war as their theme. It is the obsession and dream of the country, and so universal a preoccupation is significant. The constructors of the theory of the State, with Treitschke at their head, have expounded and supported it with all the fullness of their historical learning, all the fire of their burning patriotism, with all their culture in the broadest sense of the word, with a ruthless rigour of abstract logic which is the mark of the German mind. For war is in their eyes politics *par excellence*, and the supreme manifestation of the State.

III

THEORY OF THE STATE AND OF WAR

WHAT is, then, their theory of the State whose end is war, and whose duty is to impose its Idea by the sword? What is this last mysticism superadded to the other mysticisms of German thought?

From the times of Kant, Hegel, and Fichte a whole school of thinkers has developed it. All Germany blindly accepts a doctrine which is the transposition into metaphysical terms of the Idea of the State that Prussia conceived and realized, and of which it furnished the prototype and semi-Divine model; in the words of Hegel, "it wields supreme authority over the individual, whose first duty is to be a member of the State, the Idea of which must be worshipped as a real god upon earth." And let no one think that these are the worn-out theories of philosophers; the doctrine is a living one, and the most popular of German historians, Treitschke, whose influence in his country and notably on the corps of officers

has been enormous, translated it into a form accessible to all and spread it. "The State," he says [*Die Politik, passim*] "is the summit of human society; above it there is absolutely nothing in the history of the world." It is the supreme organism, the final result of an immense evolution. It is the self-contained State—*der geschlossene Staat*; and Treitschke cannot conceive any place above it for a reunion of States, a comity of nations. Its essence is force: "The State is Might"—*der Staat ist Macht*. ("To maintain its power is the highest duty of the State; of all political shortcomings, weakness is the most abominable and most contemptible.") It is the sin against the Holy Ghost of Politics." The supreme duty of the State is to assert itself; this constitutes its complete and imperative code of morality. The duty of the individual is self-improvement, that of the State is to increase its power: and to this duty no limit, no obligation towards others can be opposed. The successive necessities of its existence are its only law. Its past does not bind its future. No treaty, no convention acknowledged by it can hamper its abiding duty of sovereignty. The latter is absolute, and no vain scruple can hinder its action. "There is a certain truth in the maxim that the end justifies the means." For it the laws of ordinary morality do not exist. "It

is absurd to counsel a State in conflict with another to start by taking the Catechism into its hand."

From the nature of the State it follows "it cannot recognize any judge of its acts superior to itself." Every promise, every treaty is limited by the proviso *rebus sic stantibus*: should the situation change no treaty is binding.¹

¹ Assuredly this moralist and honest man, whose life was without a stain, would have approved of the violation of Belgian neutrality. The extraordinary chapter in *Die Politik* should be read in which Treitschke reproaches Frederick William IV for having in 1849 re-established order in Saxony and Bavaria, and then returned home without annexing them to Prussia. It was a sin against his own State that he committed—"it was an unthinkable weakness. The blood of Prussia had been spilt in vain." It is curious to read in the light of recent events the passage in which Treitschke protests against the pretensions of Belgium to invoke International Law. "Few people realize clearly to-day how ridiculous it is for Belgium to consider itself the home of International Law. A State whose situation is abnormal can only have an abnormal conception of International Law. The Belgian State is neutral. It is a eunuch. It cannot engender a healthy International Law." Bernhardt, the disciple of Treitschke, goes farther. He declares it is lawful to ask if Belgium has not ceased to be neutral since she has acquired in Africa vast colonies which no one foresaw when her neutrality was established. From this position to that of the jurist in the *Vossische Zeitung* who proves clearly that Belgium violated her own neutrality and not Germany, since she took the liberty of opposing arms to the passage of the German Army, is only one step, and this owl-like lawyer unhesitatingly takes it.

“The State is built up by war and conquest.”
 “War is holy.” It is a law established by God.
 “It is the supreme remedy for the ills from
 which States suffer.” It is the winnowing-fan.
 It is a school of heroism and virtue. “We
 have learnt to recognize that what constitutes
 the majestic force of civilization contained in
 war is precisely what seems to the superficial
 observer brutality and inhumanity. It may,
 perhaps, at first sight appear a terrible thing
 that for the sake of our country we should stifle
 all the natural feelings of humanity, and that
 men should slaughter each other without any
 personal grievance. Yet it is just in that very
 fact that the grandeur of war consists. Man
 ought not only to show himself ready to
 sacrifice his life, but all the most profoundly
 rooted feelings of his soul. Herein lies the
 moral sublimity of war.” And elsewhere he
 writes: “It is not fitting for Germans to
 repeat the commonplaces of the apostles of
 peace or of the priests of Mammon, nor to
 close their eyes to the cruel necessities of our
 epoch. Yes, our epoch is an epoch of war,
 an iron age. For the strong to conquer the
 weak is the inexorable law of life.” And for
 weaklings he has no pity. He is convinced
 that the “salvation of Germany can only be
 attained by the annihilation of the smaller
 states.” We should not delude ourselves into

isolationism
 isolationism

isolationism!

thinking that Treitschke is alone in thinking thus; Niebuhr, Ranke, Sybel, Häusser, Droysen, Gneist, Giesebrecht, and all good Germans are of his mind. The sentiment that these historians express in their writings is unanimous. "For me, Humanity ends at the barrier of the Vosges," said William II. And such is the conception of the German State that these words should be taken literally.

In its bald simplicity of statement this doctrine may surprise our Latin minds, foolishly enamoured of vague humanitarian ideas. Treitschke imagines he justifies it by the theory that the culture of a people and its force are identical. They possess the same root, and are alike expressions of the obscure vital forces which bring a nation into being. The State exists in order to propagate its culture. The application of its might is justified by the greatness of the aims it pursues. The end justifies the means.

There was an outbreak of indignation when it became clear from the manifesto of the German "intellectuals" that they did not distinguish the culture of Germany from her militarism and declared that without it her culture would be non-existent. This declaration for those acquainted with German thought is no novelty. Nothing for a German could

be more evident or more logical ; no statement could be more inoffensive. Force is an instrument of culture, the most persuasive of all according to Treitschke. " Every dragoon who knocks a Croat on the head does more for the German cause than the most polished of political minds with its most biting pen." The stiff-necked must be restored to the bosom of German culture by force. There is no need to ask for their consent. " We Germans, who know both Germany and France, are better judges than the Alsatians of their true welfare ; better than the unfortunate folk who by reason of their intercourse with France have lived in ignorance of the new Germany. We will restore their true identity to them whether they will or no. In the gigantic alterations of the present we have too often been delighted and astonished at discovering the undying action of the moral forces of History to be able to attribute any great importance to a Referendum on the question of annexation. We appeal from the living to the dead." ¹ The thought is clear enough in spite of the Prussian pedantry of expression : the Alsatians will become Germans again, as they were long since, by the reawakening of the instincts of their dead. We must consult the dead, the real Germans, and not the living who have

¹ " Was fordern wir von Frankreich ? "

forgotten for a time their race, but whose memory will one day return to them'.

It is unnecessary to multiply quotations. The doctrine is clear, and the long military developments given it by Bernhardi in his book "Deutschland und der nächste Krieg" and by different theorists on war add nothing to its essence. The latter apply to war considered as a metaphysical entity the same rigour of frenzied logic as to the analysis of that other mystical entity, "The State." They make evident its transcendental nature—"War is War." Its very definition is "Force and barbarism." Its end is "the annihilation of the enemy." The more barbarous and inhuman it is, the more perfect it is, and the better it fulfils its end. It suppresses and denies all that contradicts its essence—pity, kindly feelings, humanity. It is a return to the state of Nature. It takes the place of God: consequently it ignores the moral laws imagined by Society; and, like the God of Nature, it has no regard for the individual; like Him, it creates by destruction and death. No scruple, convention, or prejudice can hinder the ruthless advance of this force once let loose; it must exteriorize and liberate all its hidden energies, and attain swiftly and by any means, whether treachery, lying, or frightfulness, the maximum of results; for results alone count. Its duty

is to strike terror into all, and thereby paralyse all resistance. The very excess of its atrociousness renders it finally less destructive; the very excess of its inhumanity more humane; for the more crushing is its impact, the sooner it will be over. The more scientific it is, the more perfect it will be. All the forces of the culture whose supreme expression it is must co-operate in thus rendering it efficient. It is this culture itself in course of supreme self-realization; and as such, it is Divine. It is not, as maudlin Latin thinkers pretend, the highest immorality, but the highest morality, since before its presence all mere appearances crumble away, all the shams of Peace, that creator of unreal values; before its awful presence Truth alone can live. War alone re-creates true values and restores to Force and Life the rights usurped by Weakness and Death, whose rights are non-existent.

Such is the doctrine of the State and of War born of the marriage between Prussian practice and the mysticism of German logicians. There is not a German to-day who does not profess it. Prussianized Germany holds that success is identical with morality, and that the morality of individuals has nothing to do with the transcendental morality of the State. The latter is the Super-being. It knows not the ethics of Slaves.

70 THE DEEPER CAUSES OF THE WAR

A supreme and absolute Reality, it is only accountable to itself. Since it is absolute Force it is absolute Right, for Might is Right, It is the *Raison d'État* incarnate, enthroned above Public Right, which is only a will-o'-the-wisp of theorists. War is its natural outcome and means of expression. The doctrine is merely the practice of Frederick the Great raised to the majesty of a mystical entity. "I begin by taking," said the latter ; "I can always find pedants afterwards to justify what I have done." This race of pedants, metaphysicians, and propagandists has never failed in Germany. To-day it rules supreme. For a century it has spread its gospel by means of the schools, the universities, and the pulpit, and has infected the innermost cells of the German organism with the virus of its faith. And now it yields itself up to an orgy of its primitive instincts. Drunk with the glorious vision of Germany's material greatness, the prodigious success of all German efforts, the triumph of German culture, rapt in the contemplation of its features mirrored by its past and its soul, dazzled by the image which it has created and by which it is hypnotized, the whole race has lost all balance. It no longer sees realities or denies their existence. Once the most profound interpreter of past or alien civilizations, it can no longer understand any but its

own civilization, and can only realize it in a form divested of all that was its former glory. It staggers beneath the intoxication of a monstrous and bloody dream which has become the dream of all Germany, the collective insanity of an entire nation.

IV

GERMANY'S EXPANSION AND HEMMING-IN

OTHER influences have fed Germany's dreams and determined the course of her madness.

And firstly, a unique sensation of power has been superadded to her mysticism and traced new paths before its feet. Her successes, which fell on Europe like a thunderbolt in 1866 and 1870, the intoxication of force and sudden opulence that flooded her needy and insignificant States after their victories and the influx of the billions which her war indemnity brought her, the giddy prosperity which followed, her supremacy, which has raised the Teuton from his age-long humiliation and weakness to a lordship over the destinies of the world—all the dizzy excess of strength and wealth which too suddenly broke upon her, have turned the brain of this parvenu among the nations and inflated yet more abnormally the gross and childish infatuation fostered in her by the theorists of her moral superiority. Her dazzling prosperity has been too much for her. Her

dreams followed the natural trend of a naturally unbalanced mind, and hurried her to the enormous and the colossal. Her overstimulated vitality overflowed in portentous and wild excess: the last forty years have engendered twenty-four millions of new Germans that swell her already teeming multitudes, millions of others for whom there is no room in Germany and whose emigration beyond the seas is clear loss for the Fatherland. The formidable fabric of her industry and commerce rose like an exhalation. Germany built up her fortune in an intoxication of creative joy, careless of the morrow—or rather, drunk with confidence and contemptuous of danger, forgetful of all prudence. Her captains of industry and commerce seem inspired by the same daring which gave victory to her kings and armies; like them, they set out to conquer the world, and their motto is the same: "Live dangerously." They scatter broadcast over their land coarse and massive monuments of German strength, the emblems of their soul: everywhere their eyes meet nothing but manifestations of a material greatness, a disciplined force, a universal efficiency of organization no other country in the world can match. Their Press, their professors, their leagues, their Emperor din endlessly into their ears that they

are the salt of the earth,¹ the Imperial race to whom God has promised universal sway ; and they are ready to believe it. For never was a race better prepared by the structure of its mind to receive passively such an imprint. The German is plastic by nature, easily led, above all sensitive to the suggestions of mysticism and vanity. He must be inspired, directed, controlled, and in military-ridden and bureaucratic Prussia he has found his predestined master. Subordination, obedience, discipline are the natural forms of his activity, and he only yields his full measure of output when under drill. Germany is a barracks and a factory ; its spirit is the spirit of the hive. In it the all-powerful instinct of the community sternly subordinates to the ends it seeks the individual wills which imagine they are free, but have only the illusion of liberty and initiative. Inexorably they are bent under the spell of the collective dream which a conspiracy of forces and necessities has created. So persistent and profound an hypnotic suggestion is not without its dangers. Little by little it creates a somnambulistic state of a special kind. Every people lives in a dream, created by its past and its leaders, by the incessant strengthening by history and fate of its

¹ "Wir sind das Salz der Erde," speech of William II, March 1903.

essential characteristics ; and this dream determines the attitude and behaviour of its children. But in the case of Germany the suggestion is more definite, imperious, and absolute than elsewhere, and its outcome is a veritable collective hallucination. The German has reached a state of mind that can see in the world no qualities superior to those of his race. He claims for it whatever the universe has produced that is great—men and ideas—and all the riches and power that it contains are his by right.¹

And thus did the intoxication of their success and superiority, perpetually stimulated by an incessant propaganda, which further raises their colossal vanity to a white heat, work havoc in the ill-prepared brains of these upstarts. This intoxication has engendered all the defects of the parvenu—vulgarity, presumption, a spirit of aggressive tyranny, a need for self-assertion, which German pedantry, Prussian brutality, and the native coarseness and incurable puerility of a race

¹ See the writings of Houston Chamberlain, Woltmann, Reimer, Hasse, Reventlow, etc., who claim for the German race all the glories of other races, from Dante, Michel Angelo, and Leonardo da Vinci to Joan of Arc and Cecil Rhodes. On the other hand, the popularity of the ideas of Count de Gobineau is well known. They brought from outside a confirmation of this doctrine of the essential superiority of the Germans.

refractory to civilization render still more irritating and intolerable to the older aristocracies which surround Germany. In their eyes these helots are not only a permanent menace to their security and their fortune ; they are also an ever-welling source of humiliation to their pride. By her conception of the State, by her ethics, which are those of a past age, and by all the aims of her civilization, Germany constitutes in the modern world an anachronism and a barbarism. Against this barbarism all the alarmed forces of civilization slowly organize themselves. But in her barbarism and in these aims Germany gloats. She looks upon her defects with other eyes ; they inspire her with pride, not shame. In the general submission to her tyranny she sees the promise of her future supremacy ; in the acceptance of the humiliations she inflicts the proof of her power and an incentive to add fresh insults. She never wearies of seeking occasions for revelling in the consciousness of her strength. She can tolerate no opposition. Every attempt to oppose her will is in her eyes a sort of high treason ; and yet on all sides the opposition grows. In proportion as her power and her pride increase and her dream of world-domination swells, they encounter with greater force the obstacles and hindrances raised against

her expansion by the hatred and jealousy of weaker peoples, who hypocritically and unfairly conspire to refuse her the legitimate place due to her unquestioned superiority, her unique qualities, her swarming population, her growing needs, and pitiless vital necessities. On this she is determined to seize by the same forcible means her enemies, now gorged with their prey, formerly employed, and which their hypocrisy, now sated, disavows, since they no longer need to use them. Fed by the consciousness of her superiority and power, smarting under this injustice and outraged by this hypocrisy, exasperated by the pressure of these needs and obligations, her ambitions take a more definite form. Her unity and her wealth cannot satisfy her cravings, and the confines of Europe are too narrow to contain her. Her destiny is to overflow these bounds and carry her culture beyond them. Her task is to organize the whole world and make it a hive of industry, in which each nation shall work for her according to its capacities, under her management and along the lines laid down by her genius. Every form of resistance must be crushed, for not only is her prestige at stake, but the future of her culture, which it is her duty to impose on all, since for all it constitutes a blessing; not these alone, but her very existence is

imperilled, for she stifles within the ever tightening bonds in which cowardly and underhand enemies seek to confine her. She rages against the restraints she meets in every direction at the culminating moment of her power, against the ever-present hindrances to growth which have hampered her in the past and compromise her future. These restraints and hindrances must be known, her condition of mind and her ambitions described, these obstacles enumerated, if we are to estimate fully the degree of exasperation Germany has reached. However untrue or exaggerated these ideas may be, their influence has been too potent to be ignored.

From time immemorial Prussia and Germany have suffered from the lack of natural defensive frontiers; their growth has been frustrated by the artificial barriers of puny nations—Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland—their commercial expansion choked by England, which bars the North Sea and reigns supreme over the oceans; or they have been held in check by the permanent menace of their Latin and Slav neighbours. Such is their conception of their common history. By a strange paradox each increase in their power has added to their insecurity, and imposed on them yet more strenuous efforts. Prussia, the march against the East,

has long since become a march against the West as well, and must needs on both frontiers keep ever an armed watch which permits neither her nor Germany to doff the crushing weight of their armour. Their growth is only equalled by that of the United States ; yet each fresh accession in size of her huge body, while widening the field of Germany's ambitions, hampers yet more her movements, increases the sense of suffocation she labours under, and narrows the horizon of her action. Her giant frame literally stifles and struggles for free breath and wider space. All the outlets she seeks throughout the world are successively barred ; in proportion as her power grows and with it the consciousness of her power and of the legitimacy of her ambitions, her diplomacy meets more and more humiliating defeats, and the vice-like clutch gradually tightens round her throat. The hatred of the whole world encompasses her : " Germany has not a friend on earth " (Maximilian Harden). She is the elect among the nations ; none other equals her in material and spiritual efficiency ; her culture is the supreme expression of human genius ; all humanity should profit by it ; her mission is Divine, and yet all are blind to her mission. But her force of expansion is irresistible. She is a force of Nature that nothing can restrain ;

she will rend the bonds that bind her, and break her way through the wall of enmities that hems her in. In spite of the opposition of inferior races, barbarous or decadent, she will fulfil the mandate conferred on her by the Eternal. Over the conquered earth she will establish the reign of the *Pax Germanica* and German order, her culture and the benefits of her spirit, and the nations to-day blinded by error shall joyfully share one day in the majesty of her fortune; in their despite she will give them the full measure of happiness she has given to her subjects in Alsace-Lorraine, in Denmark, Italy, Hungary, Bohemia, and Poland, to all the thankless folk whom her sons hold or have held under the holy Teutonic law. Is she not born to dominion over all? And is not the greatness of Charlemagne, of the Ottonides, and the Hohenstaufen the warrant and proof of her capacity for such dominion? ¹

¹ No illusion could be more complete. The Germans forget that the spontaneous manifestation of their instincts in the Middle Ages was not the Empire, the work of a few isolated chiefs, but commerce and the Hansa League. Never was a race less Imperial, or more piteously foiled in its efforts to blend like the Romans in harmonious union the diverse elements of its conquests; and, on the other hand, never was a race more amenable to outside influences. No human substance seems more pliable or indeterminate. The German cell appears to possess no force of defence or of natural cohesion: every

With resources multiplied tenfold, the clear conviction of her Divine rights, the unanimous support of the whole race, burning to realize its ideal, with an army which is the living incarnation of her soul, and the proof of her superiority, since none in the world equals its perfection, and it is invincible, with a navy which will soon rival or surpass England's, Germany is resolved to resume at all costs her interrupted task and establish her empire for all time. Over the ruins of the modern world as formerly over the shattered remains of antiquity the German ideal shall once more rise radiant, shedding torrents of light on a dazzled world.

Such were her dreams.

The work of liberation and conquest began with the search for colonies into which Germany could pour the surplus of her population and of her frenzied industrial production. The last to appear in the comity of nations, she could only seize on what her rivals, laden with booty, had disdained to take.

German who emigrates is lost to Germany. At the end of a generation he is absorbed, and dissolves into the foreign environment. In Westphalia the Poles who have been forcibly brought there have imposed their language and their habits on the Germans of the villages in which they have settled. Everywhere and under all circumstances the Englishman and the Frenchman, on the contrary, preserve their irreducible individuality and their racial reactions.

Weak Belgium, puny Holland, even Portugal possess richer and vaster colonies or outlets for trade than she. But everywhere her efforts failed; and soon she discovered she could do nothing with her sterile domains in Africa or Oceania. In 1910 her commerce with her colonies amounted to only £2,000,000, while England exported to Australia, India, and Canada alone goods worth more than £100,000,000. As conquest brings such poor returns, she seeks new formulæ—"peaceful penetration"—and selects Venezuela for the experiment. After the usual transactions—loans, the purchase of mines, the establishment of certain inevitable industries—she sent the usual man-of-war to demand a share in the government of the country. We know with what success. The United States were at once aroused: they instantly opposed to this attempt at German interference the veto of a new interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine. Later, alarmed by Germany's proposal to rouse against them a European coalition in favour of Spain, they increased their fleet and their means of defence; inspired by England, they adopted in the Philippines an imperialistic policy which secured Farther India against German ambitions. America was closed. Farther India was closed. Would South Africa, in revolt against England, offer an opening?

We all remember the annihilation of the

hopes founded on the disintegration of the British Empire in Africa and the crushing defeat the victory of England meant for German ambitions.

Would Asia open up? Persia and Turkey, the road to India, and the legendary territories of the Assyrian and Mesopotamian Empires — surely here were vast fields for Germany's energies. But here again, in spite of partial successes, defeat awaited her. Before her rose the coalition of her eternal enemies, Russia, France, and England. And the road was barred. Failure again attended her every effort to rouse against England in Egypt and India, against France in North Africa that pan-Islamism of which William has posed as the appointed defender and chief. Only one hope remained, that of creating, by the abandonment of the Ægean Isles to Italy and by the revolt of the Balkans in Eastern Europe, certain bastions of pan-Germanism in the shape of a confederation destined to extend to the Bosphorus and Saloniki, beyond them to Asia Minor and Bagdad, new possibilities for German expansion. By her concessions to Italy she outwitted the diplomacy of the Entente, and strengthened her alliance. By her action in the Balkans she hoped to outwit it further. She failed; and once more

her enemies' diplomacy baffled her, and the peace that followed the war was unfavourable to her projects. A new and impassable barrier confronted her.

On the other hand, her scheming in Morocco produced no other result than to revolt the conscience of the world against the brutality of her behaviour, to bring together France and England, and to transform into an effective alliance the vague understanding that united them. America, Farther India, Africa, and Europe were already closed; and now Morocco, which is a sort of continuation of Europe, was also barred against all her efforts at penetration. Her defeat was complete, and the whole earth is now forbidden ground. No door remains open: on all sides she meets an imperative, inflexible, and absolute denial of right of way. Not in Europe alone does Germany suffocate under the pressure she has always borne, but wherever her efforts carry her. The farther her colossal power throws the frontiers of her activity, the more numerous are the surfaces of compression; the unbearable pressure exercised by her enemies becomes more stifling; and each increase of her power increases the intolerable sensation of her powerlessness. To this situation there is one solution and only one: to

destroy the nerve-centres of the forces which throughout the globe paralyse her, to crush for all time Russia, France, and England, and thus dry up the fountain-heads of the hostility which seeks her humiliation and opposes her very existence. And it is this solution that has prevailed. This war is the final convulsion of the colossus whose uneasy stirrings for half a century have shaken the world.

V

CONCLUSION

SUCH, briefly, are the deeper causes of this war, whose like the world has never seen. By its symbolic grandeur, by the elemental power of the forces it has let loose, the enormousness of the material interests involved, the infinite gravity of the spiritual principles opposed, the problems it raises, the results that it brings in its train, it is the culminating point in History. Its magnitude infinitely exceeds its immediate origins. It is not only the last effort of Prussia's eternal militarism, but of militarism pure and simple; not only the goal of the monstrous evolution of a predatory nation artificially created for warlike ends alone, but the application of mystic theories, the overflow of a will to power born of frenzied pride or the will to live; it is in its final analysis a struggle for existence, an outcome of that instinct of self-preservation which is the foundation of life itself. On both sides it is a sacred war. For Germany it is a "holy

crusade,"¹ a religious war; and like all such, its atrocity and its implacable fury can know no bounds. And like all religious wars, it can only end by the annihilation of one of the rival religions, the final victory of one ideal over the opposing one. It is more than a conflict between the democratic idea and the autocratic, more than any attempt at geographical rearrangements or political changes, more than the pursuit of some new hegemony or supremacy: it imperils the very foundations of civilization and its future; the innermost destinies of the human soul are bound up in its issues. On one side we see arrayed all the obscure forces of the past and of man's undying barbarism, multiplied tenfold by science and conscious mysticism; all the mechanical conceptions inspired by a transcendental materialism which considers that man is a means and not an end in himself, which can discover in history and Nature only the brutal reign of violence, and recognizes no other sign of election than success, God's verdict upon earth; an attempt to reduce the infinite diversity of the world and of the spirit to the depressing uniformity of a single culture, and to subject all nations to the autocratic tyranny of a single State, by means atrocious beyond words, at a cost

¹ I take the expression from a German letter.

of human lives, through a frenzied excess of destruction such as the world has never known. On the other side we see arrayed all that the efforts of Greece, Rome, and Judea, of all Christian and civilized Europe, all that the aspirations of the soul and spirit of man since his birth have done "to secure in human life the supremacy of the higher instincts over the lower ones, of justice over violence, of reason over blind impulse, of morality over immorality, and to create in the world a moral force capable of governing and humanizing material forces" (Emile Boutroux); the determination to live free in the smaller States as in the greater, to follow the dictates of the inner voice along the predestined road which the past and the instincts of each create, to work out one's own salvation for oneself and to be the artisan of one's own destiny. Between these two alternatives the death-struggle has begun; and in the frozen plains of Flanders and Poland to-day rages the eternal conflict between darkness and light. When will the dawn arise? And will its light endure?

PART II

**GERMANY'S SENTIMENTS TOWARDS
ENGLAND**

INTRODUCTION

THE deeper causes of the war are not to be found solely in the general psychology and past of Germany. The rapid growth of German life, its ever multiplying relations with other peoples, have gradually transformed the German mind. Its attitude towards the new problems it encounters reveals new aspects of its nature. Above all Germany's gross diplomatic mistakes, her invariable misconception of the strength of her adversaries lay bare certain vital incapacities in German thought. And thus, to describe the feelings of Germany towards her enemies and the theories she has elaborated on them is a means of defining some of the most characteristic of these incapacities. In no instance is this truer than where England is concerned.

Germany has a theory about England, as it has on every country and everything, for its brain secretes systems as naturally as a bee distils honey or a serpent venom. However extraordinary these theories may be, however offensive to our feelings as Allies, they must

be set forth in all their full and characteristic extravagance, for their metaphysics inspire the acts of these system-mongers and at times explain their failures. To refute vapourings which refute themselves would appear an idle task, if by so doing we did not help to throw light on the soul of a people all of whose manifestations, even the wildest, are of grave import at the present moment.

I

GERMANY'S HATRED OF ENGLAND

GERMANY willed this war from the bottom of her heart: it lay dormant in her womb, and Austria's action merely hastened its inevitable birth. But however sure Germany was of her superior strength, she was still more assured of the weakness of her adversaries; and this blind conviction it was which misled her into believing her victory was certain and flung her armies into battle. No time could be more favourable than that she chose. She struck at corrupt and semi-barbarous Russia before it had completed its economic and military reorganization. Decadent France was the prey of mob orators and utter social decay; she had acknowledged she was unready, and was fated to break under the first shock. Degenerate England was divided against itself over the question of Home Rule, threatened by civil war, ruled by Liberals, whose tradition was pacifism and opposition to any aggressive action on the Continent; in a word, she was paralysed and bereft both of the courage and

the power to interfere. Of what avail were the convulsive struggles of these decadent countries against the organized strength of Germany, sound to the core? or their failing vitality against the irresistible onrush of the living German forces? Everything in Germany contributed to foster the colossal misconceptions which filled her with contempt for her adversaries, threw her headlong into a venture which shatters her power, and prepared by resounding diplomatic defeats the total ruin which a near future holds in store for her infatuation.

She was utterly mistaken about Russia, utterly about France, utterly about Belgium. But of all her accumulated mistakes none was more disastrous than that which blinded her to the strength of the adversary she hated most of all—England; and none more clearly reveals the defects of her vision. This hatred and the astounding ideas Germany has elaborated about her rival are one of the decisive causes of the war, and not the least.¹ Sooner or later these feelings were bound to hurl her against the Power she held responsible for hemming her in; and when the inevitable

¹ "These mistakes of calculation on England, so vast, so grotesque, and so tragic, are one of the causes, perhaps the principal one, of the war" (Mr. Asquith, speech at Edinburgh, September 18, 1914).

storm burst the passion and unanimity of fury which she displayed threw lurid gleams of light on depths unsuspected in her soul. The significance of this struggle was illuminated by her hatred; and what had often been taken for a mere quarrel between rival shopkeepers lays bare certain essential aspects of contemporary German psychology.

By a single example we can gauge the virulence of her feelings. We have only to read Ernst Lissauer's ode against England, which the Kaiser rewarded by decorating its author and ordering it to be officially sung in his presence. In the twinkling of an eye it overran all Germany. Every German mouth sang it, and every school taught it to the children. No translation can fully render the savage vehemence of the curt, massive sentences, the shock of the German monosyllables whose hiss and impact is that of bullets. But much of their force is retained in Mr. Brereton's spirited version, which I quote:—

THE HYMN OF HATE.

French and Russian, they matter not;
 A blow for a blow and a shot for a shot;
 We love them not, we hate them not.
 We hold the Vosges, our Western gate;
 To east, the Vistula is our own:
 We have one hate, our only hate;
 We have one foe, and one alone—
 ENGLAND!

He is known to you all, he is known to you all ;
 He crouches behind the dark, grey flood,
 Full of envy, of rage, of craft, of gall,
 Cut off by waves that are thicker than blood.
 Come, let us stand at the judgment-place,
 An oath to swear to, face to face,
 An oath of bronze no wind can shake,
 An oath for our sons and their sons to take.
 Come, hear the word, repeat the word,
 Throughout the Fatherland make it heard :
 We will never forgo our hate,
 We have all but a single hate ;
 We love as one, we hate as one ;
 We have one foe and one alone—
 ENGLAND !

In the Captain's mess, in the banquet-hall,
 Sat feasting the officers, one and all.
 Like a sabre-blow, like the swing of a sail,
 One seized his glass—held high to hail.
 Sharp-snapped like the stroke of a rudder's play,
 He spoke three words only: "To the Day!"
 Whose glass this fate?
 They had all but a single hate.
 Who was thus known?
 They had one foe, and one alone—
 ENGLAND !

Take you the folk of the earth in pay,
 With bars of gold your ramparts lay ;
 To every wind your sails may bow—
 Ye reckon well, but not well enough now !
 French and Russian, they matter not ;
 A blow for a blow and a shot for a shot.
 We fight the battle with bronze and steel,
 And the time that is coming peace will seal.
 But you will we hate with a lasting hate !

Hate by water and hate by land,
 Hate of the head and hate of the hand,
 Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown,
 Hate of seventy millions, choking down!
 We love as one, we hate as one;
 We have one foe and one alone—
 ENGLAND!

This frenzied outburst of fury astonished the whole world, and above all its unconscious object. Nothing could have startled sleepy England more than this sudden spurt of vitriol. Yet the revelation of Germany's hysteria was no surprise for those who had watched the evolution of her feelings towards her enemy. The fire had long smouldered before leaping into flame. No mistake could be greater than to under-estimate its fierceness and extent, or to suppose that commercial competition, political jealousy, and all the misunderstandings of recent years alone fed the conflagration. Among the masses the feeling is, no doubt, above all, to quote Maximilian Harden, the result of a squabble between two rival shopkeepers. But among the doctrinaires of German Kultur who sway at will the hearts and minds of the passive hordes they exploit, this hate sinks far deeper: it is stirred, not only by every partial or chance manifestation of England's power, all the humiliations, all the obstacles England has accumulated in

Germany's path, but by the very existence of her detested rival ; it reaches down to the very roots of England's greatness, which it is her duty to extirpate, down to the very principle of her life. By everything that she does, practical, mercantile, and democratic England, which, according to Treitschke, Lenard, and all these theorists, is the home of all hypocrisy, of every living lie, wounds and galls the idealism of honest German brains ; and their hatred of this bandit of history, gorged with prey, has grown into a blind dogma, a complete and coherent religion, in conformity with the intellectual habits of their minds, which systematize the vaguest stirrings of their feelings, for apparently even their sensibility must needs express itself in theories and syllogisms. " This elementary and spontaneous hate," says Werner Sombart, " plunges its roots into the farthest recesses of our being, into a domain beyond the reach of reason, over which the irrational and instinctive forces rule alone. We abominate in the English a principle of life opposed in all things to the deepest and loftiest feelings of our nature," and by this he doubtless means first of all the *Deutsche Treue*, that absolute idealism and morality of which Germans hold the monopoly, and of which they have recently given such dazzling proofs ; and beyond them something more, for in the brains

of these metaphysicians their hatred assumes a metaphysical form. In their eyes this war puts to the test all Germany's conceptions as to the true values in life—we shall see what this means—all the essential ideas which inform German civilization and all real civilization: the whole fabric of Kultur would crumble to pieces if these ideas were proved untrue. In their minds this conflict of doctrines and spirit alone has significance; consequently, in analysing their thesis one may consider as relatively unimportant any description of the trammels imposed on the formidable expansion of German trade by English competition. Besides, all are familiar with these hindrances and the statistics which show with what lightning rapidity Germany has increased her industrial and commercial output, and transformed her peasants into ever-swelling crowds of needy artisans, whose daily existence depends upon the ever-growing intensity of her production. Doubtless these workmen, who constitute the life-cells of the vague, vast German organism, sweat and fail under the stifling coercion of England; but far more intolerable than their exasperation is the conviction of these theorists, that they are the victims of unbearable injustice, of the maintenance by England of a living lie which arrests not only the development of Germany but of all higher

forms of life. They refuse to accept as an inevitable and lasting force, as a real thing, England's dominion over the sea, the markets of the world, her colonial supremacy, which other races admit resignedly as if they were some fatality imposed by history and the will of Eternal God. Her sway is founded on an illusion, and the colossus is of clay. Its strength is a mere sham, its Empire an empty phantom, its moral superiority an imposture, destined to disappear before the first shock of Reality. It is Germany's sacred duty to destroy this living lie, which perpetuates all the forces of decay. Germany alone can accomplish the task, for Germany alone possesses the magic touchstone which reveals in all things the true, the real, and distinguishes between living realities and dead shams. It is Germany's profound sense of the *real*, this hold on reality, which the German mind alone possesses in its fullness, that reveals not only to her eyes the lie England is, hidden from other eyes, but gives her the power to strike it to the dust. It is this German "Truthfulness" which is the very essence of the German spirit, and the "deepest and loftiest feelings," Sombart speaks of.

II

THEORY OF THE REAL

WE reach here the vital germ of Germany's philosophy of action, the root principle that feeds her will to power, determines her evolution, and inspires her with boundless confidence and daring. This conception of the "real" which dominates her politics, her diplomacy, and all the forms of her activity, is not merely the outcome of abstract thought, a dogma elaborated by the realists, who have ever been the cynical artisans of her greatness; it is something more than a magical receipt that realizes the crushing superiority of her commerce, her industry, her army; it is the expression of her soul's obscurest instincts, and, so to say, the consciousness of the living forces that created her.

No theory was ever more fruitful in consequences, nor could any more clearly reveal the workings of Germany's mind in the domain of action. Its importance is supreme, and even if we prick our fingers on a few metaphysical thorns it must be expounded. The origins of

this philosophy and theory, so purely Germanic in nature, are, moreover, extremely clear, and their developments can easily be traced.

Fichte was the first of German thinkers to set them forth, with unrivalled power and completeness. In his eyes the Divine idea of the world, of which the visible universe is merely a symbol, of which appearances and created things are merely a garment and a sign, which alone truly *exists*, reveals itself only to the inspired who have eyes to discern it, souls to possess it, and live in it wholly. It is the condition of all virtue, of all liberty, all knowledge, all true action. By a privilege granted to none other, and which he owes to his soul, the home of the Universal, to his language, which alone, differing in that from the Neo-Latin tongues, keeps in its Germanic purity the plastic suppleness through which alone the living forces of life are revealed in all their subtlest workings, and which alone can express the Absolute, the Teuton, by the very structure of his brain and speech, at one bound attains and spontaneously gives expression to the Idea which is Reality. His thought is one with the essence of the object it contemplates, one with the action it realizes; his idealism and his realism are one; he is the Idealist and Realist combined to whom the world will owe its salvation. "Races yet unborn implore you,"

exclaims Fichte in his Discourses to his countrymen; "the stranger in far-off lands entreats you; they and all the ages of humanity throughout the future have faith in you, and implore you to guard against any possibility that in the great confederation of a new humanity, the member *which is the most essential of all to its existence should disappear*; they must not search for you in vain when they need your counsels, your example, your help. . . . You it is to whom among all modern nations *the seeds of human perfection have been entrusted, and to whom has been given the first place in developing them. If you succumb, humanity succumbs with you, and all hope of any future renovation will be lost.*"¹ And all the metaphysicians of his time, intoxicated with the Absolute, the Universal, the Divine Reality and Germanism, fatuous Narcissi, grey-haired and spectacled, contemplate unceasingly with the same thrills of satisfied vanity the image which their unfathomable Germanic fatuousness reflects. Schelling declares that the destiny of the Teuton is the destiny of all men, since he alone is fated to realize all possible developments, parts of which other races have singly realized in turn, and so finally to incarnate the highest and completest unity human nature is capable of attaining.

¹ "Discourses to the German People."

Schlegel, in his search throughout all nations for the imperishable Word of Divine Revelation, can only find its final and complete manifestation in Germany, through whom it is born again for the whole world.

And these extravagant pretensions were expounded in all earnestness more than a century ago, before Germany's world-dominion and giddy fortune, before the chosen race had even awakened to the consciousness of its task. Such gospels never fail in finding converts. Germany's wild and silly infatuation, which, like all things German, attains the majestic splendour of the Absolute, thus founded her faith on the unshakable foundations of her vanity and folly.

Let us translate into simpler words these metaphysics and the consequences Fichte and all Germany derive from them. They are content at first to project into empty space their resounding formulas and vague assertions of infinite superiority. These are, in the first instance, a mere jargon of the schools. But little by little this philosophy sinks into the German brain and impregnates it. Under a more concrete and stimulating form, the theory of the "Hero," of the sublime realists who are an emanation of the supreme Reality, it becomes the practical religion of the whole country.

It is, perhaps, hardly indispensable to be born a German to be thus illuminated by the revelation of the Real, and the intuition which reveals it, however meagrely accorded to our inferior minds, is not a purely German monopoly. Doubtless all the trend of civilization is to free man from the pressure of the cruel realities which dominate his life, so that at times he ceases to feel their terrible stress. We live in the fallacious security of an artificial world from which elementary realities have been banished—hunger, thirst, the intolerable touch of heat and cold; death and disease alone are ever present to recall to us inexorably the essential wretchedness of our condition. But if some catastrophe—shipwreck, earthquake, war—tears from us the protecting garments which alone shield us from it, we are left naked and shivering face to face with the awful Presence. These sudden catastrophes are not the only things that reveal it to us. Every thinking man, at least once in his life, has felt the foundations of his beliefs, the faith by which he lives, quiver beneath his feet, has questioned his soul, has asked himself whether what is true for others is true for him, has met on his path the inexorable sphinx whose riddles must be divined if we would escape spiritual death. Some suffering, some injustice inflicted by Fate or

our fellow-men, the astonishment of unmerited pain, the lightning gleam of some great disaster suddenly discloses beneath our feet a gulf that threatens to swallow up the whole fabric of our lives, all the beliefs it rests upon. In a flash our illusions crumble to dust, the shams we live on fade like ghosts. We are compelled to rethink all our thoughts, to rebuild another faith in ourselves, and to find other meanings in life, to reconstruct another truth and another reality. The face of this new reality may be formidable to us, may spell death. If so, the soul of the coward shrinks from it. But the heroic soul rejoices in its revelation with a joy Divine; for in it, however appalling its shape, it recognizes the very essence of its being, the principle of its very life, which is a veracity, and consequently can see in no truth an enemy or a stranger. The hero is suffused by the illumination of this veracity through no mere accident, no sudden pain; his gaze does not merely pierce through the shams and conventions other men live on; the *real* is his by right of birth, his the vision—a truth, a beauty, or a power which through him are realized; he alone among the children of men *sees*. His soul is a fragment of the Divine, and shares in its designs; his personal and limited human experience expands naturally and freely into

the Universal ; all humanity is the richer for his discoveries and his trials. The revelation which burst like a thunderbolt on the Buddha beneath his tree, on Paul journeying to Damascus, on Luther in his cell, has been a light before the feet of countless men ; an axiom or a thought struck out by such seers is the common gain of all mankind, a star in man's firmament no darkness can ever again obscure.

In this philosophy of history and human fate which Fichte expounds and Carlyle interprets in turn with a genius whose influence on Germany has been profound, the Heroes alone are living souls, the great Realists alone truly act ; from generation to generation they arise and dower their age with some ever new and ever stimulating representation of Eternal Reality, whose essence is one throughout the ever-changing forms that reveal it. At a stroke they sweep away all shams, all the dead forms extinct life has left behind ; they are drawn irresistibly to the living and the true, as iron flies to a loadstone, under the impulse of a law of their being, which is a force of Nature. They are the guiding stars of humanity, the seers whose appointed task it is to guide its steps ; over it their rights are absolute, for alone in a world of the blind they see. The mediocre swarms of ordinary

men live on external things, on the outskirts of Life, among shams, illusions, among worn-out shibboleths and empty shells of past existences ; the sacred prophet is justified in working his will on them, for his vision attains the supreme Reality, the Divine Idea, and reveals new forces of life ; his rights are Divine, and to them none other can be opposed. These swarms are merely the passive material used by the hero to realize the Divine upon earth. "To impose on other men a state of Right, to forcibly place on their necks the yoke of Right, is not only the right, but the sacred duty of every man who has the power and knowledge to do so. When the necessity arises, one man has the right to impose his will on all mankind ; for in all matters opposed to right, its rights or liberty are absolutely non-existent." ¹ The outcome of this philosophy is consequently an iron dogmatism, autocracy, a despotism, a mysticism of Divine right. It fades into the theory of the State conceived by Hegel and realized by Prussia, from whom it is borrowed, the State which is "the only true God upon earth." It is not merely an abstract theory, but a moral law, an imperative duty ; it commands, and before it all must bow, men and States alike.

And what these seers are among men,

¹ Fichte : "Staats-lehre."

Germany is among the nations. Who dares deny that her clear vision is the living principle which guides her spirit? and which confers upon her a right to supremacy over all other races, not in the domain of philosophy alone, but in that of action, not merely momentary but enduring? She is the heroic race whose sons alone can gaze with undazzled eyes on all things and see their reality undaunted, however destructive their vision may be of all the illusions man's life is founded on. Through the unbroken chain of her inspired minds she communicates directly with the Spirit of the Universe, the eternal Will which organizes all, spontaneously divining its hidden designs, and from age to age makes every stirring of her brain and will one with them. Her intuition illuminates the essence of all things, the enduring realities which constitute the foundations of all life; and this intuition is hers alone. The Latin is drunk with empty words, empty phrases, which his senile and superficial mind can alone grasp; in it the place of realities is held by mere chatter, and their forces are replaced by the idle vapourings of the theorist; the Anglo-Saxon is a purblind opportunist who lives intellectually from hand to mouth, with no guiding principles, under a cloud of shams, illusions, prejudices, and lies, which his sluggish mind,

his total incapacity for philosophical thought, his crass conceit, his flabby luxuriousness maintain like an impenetrable curtain between his eyes and reality; the Slav, half Asiatic in blood, infests Europe with the poisonous emanations of his original home, the deadly vapours under whose influence the brain reels and the will dissolves, and spreads a doctrine of nihilism and torpor, the diseased teachings of a slave-morality and a brain which is that of a barbarian and a child.¹ Germany, Germany alone through its philosophers, its princes of thought and action, from the great realists whose names are Luther, Frederick II, Bismarck, down to the contemporary creators of the most efficient, the most perfect organization of man's force the planet has ever seen—Germany alone builds on the imperishable foundations of the *Real* all the spiritual or material fabric of her greatness. The German soul alone has torn asunder the veils that hide the inner realities of past or present civilizations, has revealed or expounded the living Ideas which have brought them into being, the living germ of truth which has given

¹ Hugo Münsterberg: "A Treatise on Psychology," p. 234. The Latin races are children of the moment: the Teuton lives in the things which lie beyond the world, in the infinite and the ineffable, etc. Elsewhere he writes: The culture of the Russian is wholly Asiatic.

them strength to endure—whether Greek, Hindoo, mediæval, or contemporary—the very essence of every religion and all philosophies—whether Aryan or Hebraic—and in all things has clearly manifested the inmost significance and hidden energies of the Universe, clearly shown the hidden workings of the human mind—the proof is Kant—and at all times marked out on what lines man's progress is possible. What would the philosophy, the achievement, the thought of the world have been had German insight, the German grasp on true realities never existed? What gaps would yawn in the edifice of civilization if the massive granite¹ of reality, which Germany's sons have quarried, were lacking in its foundations!

And thus they are, in Fichte's words, "the people *per se*," "the chosen race," and Germany, the mother of the inspired, has a sacred mission before which all men must bow, and to which they can oppose "no right, no liberty of thought." Since, like these heroes, Germany has clear vision and holy force, her duty is to "impose her

¹ The expression is Treitschke's. In his "Life of Frederick the Great" he asserts: "The springs of his potent brain are the ruthless, the pitiless German sense of reality. . . . He pretends to be only what he really is, and sees things as they are . . . he only notices realities." All these ideas are commonplace in Germany.

will on all mankind," for the brief flashes of light which illumine their souls and reveal the will of the Universe, in Germany's soul are a steady-streaming light, and the road she pursues triumphantly is from end to end the "road to Damascus." She alone sees and understands and possesses the secret of life, of action, of perfect organization, of victory; her success is a personal triumph for God Almighty and the blinding, the certain proof that her naïve faith is true. She is the predestined guide of all the world. To attempt to trammel the fulfilment of her destiny, which is to impose on all the Truth, *her* truth, is to revolt against the Divine order of the Universe, is treason against God Himself. And thus the poet Wolfskehl writes in all seriousness: "It is the life or death of the soul of Europe we are fighting for, . . . Your accomplices are sinning against the Holy Ghost of Europe. We are fighting the battle of all mankind, for the whole world; this war comes from God Almighty. It is the Divine in humanity which is at stake; not our existence alone but that of all Europe is imperilled."¹ Thus too the Appeal of the masters of higher instruction in Germany:²

¹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 12, 1914: a reply to M. Romain Rolland.

² Berlin, October 10, 1914. This Appeal was signed by 53 Universities; it contains 3,2000 signatures.

“We are absolutely convinced that the future of all European Kultur depends on the victory of our militarism.” And thus again the hostility of degenerate England appears to these mystics and all Germany, not only a political crime, an intolerable outrage against the rights of Germany, a monstrous injustice, but a sedition of the spirit of lies against eternal truth, which by her is realized, a sin, not only against Germany but against all mankind.

III

GERMANY'S THEORIES ON ENGLAND AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

ENGLAND is not unfamiliar with these ideas. Mr. Asquith summed them up in his speech at Edinburgh on the 18th of September, 1914, in the following words: "The German culture, the German spirit, did not save the Emperor and his people from delusions as dangerous as they were absurd in regard to the British Empire. We were believed by these cultivated observers to be the decadent descendants of a people who, by a combination of luck and fraud, had managed to obtain dominion over a vast quantity of the surface and the populations of the globe. This fortuitous aggregation which goes by the name of the British Empire was supposed to be so insecurely founded, and so loosely knit together, that at the first touch of serious menace from without, it would fall to pieces and tumble to the ground. India, it was notorious to every German traveller, was on the verge of open revolt; and here at home, we, the people of

this United Kingdom, were riven by dissensions so deep and so fierce that our energies, whether for resistance or for attack, would be completely paralysed."

But even in England the full details and the metaphysical basis of these theories do not seem to be generally known. To expound them impartially, therefore, may not only throw light upon the psychology of our enemies, but may also be of service to our Allies.

In the eyes of these metaphysicians, England, then, is among the nations the Lie incarnate, and the chief hindrance, not only to German progress but to the progress of the world. Her life force is exhausted. She has everything, but can do nothing; Germany has nothing, and is potent for all good. Let the dazzling shams of this deceptive power be examined in the light of German Reality and all will crumble away in turn.

England's dominance is a myth. Her naval supremacy is due, not to genius, not to some moral superiority inherent in the race, but to the accident of geographical situation---to certain fortunate circumstances, whose influence steadily diminishes from day to day, and will ultimately disappear. Her ramshackle Empire, the product of robbery and treachery,

is a sham. To say that England is decadent is a mistake ; she has never been strong. Her power is based only on the weakness of others, and her neighbours have bowed to it only because they have so far been blind to its unreality.¹

Strong ocean currents to the north of the British Islands make navigation uncertain and even perilous for sailing vessels, and the commerce of the northern nations was formerly compelled to pass through the narrow and stormy channel England commands. In these straits Fate has so ordained it that almost all the natural harbours that afford protection to storm-tossed craft are English. This strait thus formed a barrier, at times impassable for months together (witness the attempted invasions of Cæsar, William the Conqueror, and Napoleon) and gave complete security to this island, lost in the mists of the north. Behind it the English, sheltered from the storm and stress which have periodically sapped the

¹ For the following pages consult R. G. Usher's "Pan-germanism," which contains a masterly exposé of the German theory. I have drawn on it freely. See also "Englands Weltherrschaft und die Deutsche Luxusflotte," by "Lookout," Berlin, February, 1912, which ran through fourteen editions in the space of a few weeks. See also Treitschke, *passim*, and Schiemann's "Die deutsche Weltpolitik."

vitality of continental nations, have been enabled to grow undisturbed in strength.¹ Wind, wave, and storm have all fought on the side of England; but steam sets all three at naught, and thus strips her of the advantages she owed to the existence of these currents, and destroys the long security these elemental forces conspired to maintain. Her monopoly of shipbuilding materials has also disappeared, since steel has replaced wood in shipbuilding. The engineer is to-day more important than the sailor; his training is not dependent on the seamanship which is the birthright of the inhabitants of islands indented on all sides by the sea.

One other piece of geographical good fortune has given England an importance which is out of all proportion to her real strength. She dominates the shores of those Low Countries which are the key to Northern Europe, the highway which leads to the heart of Germany and France, the natural base for any projected invasion of England. "Their possession by any one of the three nations nearest them would give her immediately a most deadly offensive weapon against the other two. To possess them has been the dream of all three; to secure them half the wars of Europe have been fought.

¹ Treitschke, "Politik," ii. 6.

Those two tiny States are now independent because England, France, and Germany cannot permit each other to control them.”¹ England’s system of alliances and her whole foreign policy have ever aimed at foiling the ambitions of all, Habsburgs or Bourbons, who claimed such mastery, and by alternate understandings with either to set each to destroy the other. With a smaller population and fewer resources than her rivals, she has—thanks to her diplomacy, which is the subtlest in the world—become the arbiter of their destinies and has been able to humble them each in turn.² Nor were these her only advantages over them. Cohesion, natural and territorial unity, the centralization which Spain did not attain until the fifteenth century, France not until the sixteenth, Germany and Italy not until the nineteenth, were assured to England as early as the eleventh century by the organization an autocrat of genius, William the Conqueror, imposed upon her; and it was the solid mass of their economic and political power which the kings who succeeded William, safe in their own united and invulnerable island, were enabled to throw into the balance against the

¹ Usher, “Pangermanism,” p. 23.

² “Englands Weltherrschaft.”

continental States, divided against themselves and threatened on all their frontiers.

But in proportion as the autocratic centralization of England gradually fell to pieces,¹ as royal authority, unity of control, and long political traditions dissolved in the hands of parliaments, ministers, and parties, a contrary evolution led her rivals, little by little, from a state of dispersion to one of concentration, from anarchy to order, from the political helplessness of puny federated States to union under one strong and single will; their monarchs became almost absolute, and gathered into their hands all the might of vast States, centralized and guided by one brain towards a single definite goal. And thus England suffered diminution, not only from her own internal weakening, but from the concurrent increase of strength in her rivals.

Politically less open to attack by England than formerly, these Powers are no longer to the same extent economically at her mercy. The commerce of Central Europe, drained by its rivers and canals, is no longer compelled to pass through the English Channel, and is no longer dependent on England's goodwill²; it can come and go along railways or through

¹ Treitschke, "Politik," ii. 132. He is speaking of the "hereditary incapacity of the Hanoverian kings."

² "Englands Weltherrschaft"

ports over which England has no control. Each day increases Europe's economic freedom from the traditional English monopolies ; and each increase in her independence not only increases her wealth and strength, but diminishes the wealth and strength of England. The world is no longer, as in Napoleon's time, dependent on this small island for coffee, sugar, tea, cotton, tobacco, and the products of the East and West Indies. England is no longer, as formerly, the only storehouse of goods essential to the life or well-being of other nations, the sole purveyor, broker, and retailer for the whole world ; and thus these profits and her mercantile power dwindle from year to year. Her commercial monopoly no longer exists. The start she had gained over her rivals grows gradually less ; soon they will overtake and pass her in the race, for their strength increases in proportion as hers fails.

Yet another lead she held, that of Industry, the greatest of all, due, even more than her commercial supremacy, to chance and not to genius, to good fortune and to ill-deserved favours, has also passed away. England, that "mass of coal and iron," first inaugurated the industrial age in which we live ; she discovered and exploited the treasures hidden in her soil, and owed to these advantages the swiftest, the most astounding increase in wealth and popu-

lation the world has ever seen. Between 1700 and 1750 her population rose from five to six million inhabitants; fifty years only swelled it one-sixth. But her industries are born and spread, and between 1750 and 1800 her population increases by more than one-half; from 1800 to 1850 the gain is 90 per cent. Her growth in wealth is even more prodigious: England becomes the workshop of the earth and her people the plutocrats of the world. Intoxicated by her prosperity, she dreams she is by right Divine appointed to be the dispenser of all industrial benefits to other nations, since the secrets of success are hers; it is from her hands all must perforce receive all the tools they work with and require, all the necessities and luxuries of life; every nation is her customer and dependent, and her economic tyranny is unquestioned.

But her power is based on an untenable paradox, the paradox which claims that all raw materials, all the varied products of every land are destined to wend their way to her distant islands and her factories in order to feed them and enrich her. Yet to this industrial life she first established all other lands are gradually awakening, even the most remote and backward; and wherever raw material is produced, in every spot, in every land, rival factories are rising, and thanks to cheaper, more

abundant labour, more productive and up-to-date processes, are competing successfully against English industries, whose methods are antiquated, whose activities are clogged by routine, and have grown slack by the very excess of their former prosperity. All the world over the rich streams that flowed towards England, bearing wealth, are changing their courses or drying up. Even in England the stocks of coal, iron, wood are diminishing with menacing rapidity; she no longer possesses the raw materials she needs for her fleets. Her industrial supremacy no less than her commercial mastery, once a reality, are now a mere sham, which the splendour of her past greatness alone conceals from the eyes it still dazzles. A hopeless, a growing weakness lies hidden behind these deceptive semblances of strength. Twelve millions of needy wage-earners live in England on a daily pay which depends wholly on these daily crumbling supremacies. When they finally collapse what will become of them and of England? When these millions of wretched creatures can no longer find work to do or bread to eat, an upheaval far more terrific than all the convulsions that rent revolutionary France will sweep away the colossal fabric of her decaying civilization like a wisp of straw. Nothing can long delay the catastrophe. A

thin crust, which every day grows thinner, alone separates England from a bottomless pit, into which no power can prevent her from crashing under her own weight. The monstrous excess of her undeserved prosperity, which is a sedition against the very nature of things, is a paradox and a falsity, for all the gigantic structure of her fortunes is built upon a lie, an economic absurdity, and rests on nothing Real. No such lie can indefinitely resist the living forces of Truth that rule the world.¹ The ruin that awaits the bloated colossus will be proportioned to the enormousness of its mass, to the giddy elevation of a fabric raised to heaven on rotting foundations, whence, in her blind conceit, England deems she is destined to dominate the world for all time.

And yet every day silently saps her strength and stealthily increases her economic weakness. Every family which leaves the country for the town, the tilling of the soil for labour in the mills, the farm for the factory, no longer produces its own food, and is no longer a self-sufficing member of society; it swells the number of parasites whose daily existence can only be maintained by the efficient working of the complicated machinery that imports food; were this machinery to break down they would

¹ Treitschke.

starve. England has long ceased to produce corn enough to supply her wants for more than six weeks, and the corn-growing surfaces ever diminish. Almost all her food comes to her by sea, and she is a tributary of foreign lands. The roots of her life are no longer in her own soil; she is a monstrous and parasitic growth whose life-juices are drawn from foreign sources, and which possesses no vitality of its own. Her existence hangs by a thread. Should any one of her adversaries obtain control of the sea for three months—less, six weeks¹—thus damming the streams of corn, of meat, of raw materials that feed her factories, and ceaselessly pour life-giving torrents into her veins, all the sources of her life would be dried up. She would starve to death. She would succumb before the onset of elementary forces far more terrible than any armed attack.

And even against armed attack what resistance can she offer? Practically none. Her life-force, her moral strength, which alone give enduring power, ensure success, and arrest fickle Fortune, have vanished. Degeneration,

¹ This doctrine is taught even in Secondary Schools in Germany. See A. Schröder, "Die Flotte als notwendige Ergänzung unserer nationalen Wehrmacht," quoted by Usher. See also Bernhardt, "Vom heutigen Kriege," Ch. XI, "Naval Warfare"; Delbrück, "Erinnerungen," Berlin, 1902.

insidious and deep, gnaws the very vitals of the race, and is gradually destroying all the organs of its life. For a century and a half England's enormous industrial development has ceaselessly torn from the soil, from the life-giving breath of outdoor occupations, from the sturdy toil of the labourer which hardens his muscles, gives him nervous and mental balance, tenacity, and solid strength, millions and millions of men, women, and children, and has penned them in the vitiated air of mills and slums, subjected them to all the depraving and anæmiating influences of the town, which sap the nerves. And if this industrial development creates material wealth, it destroys the bodies and souls of the serfs it devours by thousands; it brings to naught all the wealth that alone signifies, the wealth of humanity found only in sound bodies, morality, a balanced mind. It alternately excites and depresses these weaklings, who are a mere dust of human beings whirled about by every breath of demagogic wind, a horde of degenerates with no natural roots in the soil, which alone can nourish a healthy human growth. It is a hideous machine which untiringly draws into its insatiable maw and unceasingly devours all various living human substances and expels them in one uniform mass, dead and shapeless. Study in the gloomy haunts of their

twilight existences the livid or swollen, bestial or emaciated faces, the dwarfed or deformed bodies of the poor wretches who live there, and answer, Is it in order to produce such types of humanity that civilization exists? to swell ever more and more these countless myriads of base repetitions of some inferior human fauna? Is not a society whose outcome is this human rubbish a hellish one? Study again the cells these wretches build around their lives, the infinitely depressing rows of hovels, the monotonous succession of smoke-grimed cubes of brick, all similar and sordid, a symbol of the sordid similar lives they shelter; study the endless lines of wretched homes which all round London, all over the greater industrial centres, endlessly repeat, with the insistence of a maniac, their sombre invariable rectangles, cluster on cluster, mile after dreary mile of mean and crushing hideousness, as though some spawn of insect life had settled there and swarmed, and answer, Is it in order to produce an architecture no higher than that of a coral reef, to bring into God's light such forms of life, such visions, such monotonies of hideous depression that a society is born? No more terrible indictment against this monstrous, this abominable distortion of life was ever brought than by the English critics of English civilization, from Carlyle, Mrs. Brown-

ing, Ruskin, William Morris, Matthew Arnold, to Bernard Shaw, Galsworthy, and Masterton. They call down curses on a civilization wholly material in its aims, which murders man to bring forth riches, destroys the soul to fatten its inhuman power, and sacrifices all the higher aspirations of humanity to accomplish its base and despicable ends. Their curse is that of the prophets of old, who called down a fire from heaven to heal the earth sick with sin. Never did a protest more generous, more indignant, more fiery, rise from the heart of man against any social state. They condemn it in the principles that feed its life, in the accomplices of its infamy, in all its works. They spare nothing. Their total condemnation of it is deserved, and Germany adopts it, and calls upon the judgment of all humanity to ratify it. Their verdict is that of History, and no extenuating circumstances can be advanced to nullify it or even diminish its force.¹

But are not the oligarchy whose power and wealth are derived from the wretchedness of these serfs, the aristocracy and middle classes

¹ In her unreasoning hatred, Germany forgets that these inevitable results of industrial production are to be found to some degree in her own country, in the United States, in France, wherever it prevails, and that these defects are gradually disappearing.

which flourish on all this abject squalor, the flower of civilization that blooms out of his decaying mass infinitely superior to this rabble; and do not their vitality, the radiance of sumptuous life which are theirs, in some degree justify the existence of all this misery, without which their splendour could not endure? The foundations of no civilization, even of the most brilliant of all, the Greek, must not be examined too closely. Why should not English civilization, too, be redeemed by the magnificent results it produces? and does it not deserve more indulgent treatment on the part of Germany? No. Its apparent splendour and strength are in her eyes a mere phosphorescence of decay; no living force sustains them. Luxury and idleness have corrupted the masters, as the factory, want, and vice have rotted the slaves; the whole race is rotten to the core.¹ The Englishman of the ruling classes has become a pampered minion, an idler who only deigns to work when he chooses, and refuses all strenuous or absorbing labour. His whole existence is one web of useless and luxurious paraphernalia; he must have his numerous, heavy, and complicated meals, his week-end,

¹ See Usher, "Pangermanism," p. 35, and the quotation from the *Fortnightly Review*. All these ideas are current everywhere in Germany.

his clubs, sports, regular trips to the mountains or the sea, long yearly holidays, a costly and pampered way of living. His life is a round of amusements and idleness, occasionally broken by short intervals of slipshod work. And this way of living and all these paraphernalia he drags along with him to his colonies, or wherever he goes. All the world over, whether in Calcutta or Rangoon, at Shanghai or in Brazil, it matters not, however remote or different the country may be, he changes no habit of his ; and two Frenchmen or three Germans could live handsomely on the amount required to keep one of these traders, clerks, or civil servants, who do so little and cost so much. He cannot condescend to take upon himself the humbler necessary tasks of life ; he despises the lowly round of daily duties, the patient, steady toil and subservience to the desires or requirements of his customers which can alone bring success in our days. He ignores or despises any form of life but his own. On realities his narrow and supercilious mind has no grasp. In an ever-changing world, full of various life, he clings with blind obstinacy to his antiquated methods, and crassly cherishes the deadly illusion that his former superiority yet exists. No warnings, no repeated failures, can dissipate the fatuous dream in which he lives. And

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thus it is the whole fabric of his mind and civilization, the very nature of his will, every form of his activity, his whole way of living which in German eyes are an anachronism and a lie.¹

The oligarchy, the middle classes which shattered the power of Napoleon and founded the British Empire, were once strong in patrician virtues, in the unimpaired vitality of a race one in soul and sacrifice, made stronger yet by reason of its rivals' weakness. Traditions of Roman pride and hardihood braced their wills, and the instruments of their ambitions were a manly nation of yeomen, country folk, and sailors. These traditions and this manhood have vanished. A squalid urban population, an effeminate middle class, an aristocracy without nobility, recruited from merchants, brewers, manufacturers, financiers, a mere plutocracy without nobility, recruited from merchants, sweep aside, and shortly will, have taken the place of the Imperial race that built up England's greatness. The blood of the race is corrupted. Only its baser elements breed and multiply, the vile spawn of a drink-besotted mob. The inquiry held by the English Government after the Boer War on the degeneration of the race revealed the enormity of the evil,

¹ *Vide* Cramb's "Germany and England," pp. 22, 31, 92, 94, for a summing-up of Germany's indictment against England.

but no remedy. In its degradation it no longer realizes the obligations its fortune imposes on it. It no longer accepts the burdens of its greatness, the blood-tax, the discipline which transforms into responsible and active citizens, into willing instruments of the national idea, all the subjects of continental States, all alike drilled in the stern rules of military training which teach obedience, co-operation, the duty of sacrifice, the sense of honour, give strength to the body and force to the will. It is debased by peace and emasculated by listening to the clap-trap of humanitarian preachers. It is no longer fit to meet the fearful exigencies of modern war ; its army is a negligible quantity ; it no longer possesses the raw human material needed to constitute the gigantic agglomerations of trained soldiers which alone could meet the onset of a Great Power. England is the Carthage of our days. Her Empire is protected only by the frail shield afforded by a vile troop of mercenaries ; her last national army was Cromwell's ; since then she has had none.¹ What shall these regiments of mercenaries avail against the countless legions of patriots which the greater European States can array against her ? In the organisms these States constitute every cell is active and living, and co-operates in working out their destinies ;

¹ Treitschke, "Politik," ii. 358.

in the body politic of England these cells are inert and live for themselves alone, in view of their individual and selfish ends. England is still in the individualistic period which Germany has long left behind, and to which she has substituted the period of full organization.¹ Such an abortion as England cannot long endure; elements of disintegration and incapacities for perpetuating life are bound up in the very essence of her being. She can only live so long as her rivals put up with her or remain blind to her weakness. So soon as their ignorance of her fundamental vices disappears, so soon as they attack her boldly, the whole structure of her life will crumble to the ground.

Her Empire will then become their prey. For her Empire is no more a Reality than her naval, commercial, industrial, political, or military supremacy. It is a glittering sham, devoid of inner life or any true cohesion. It will fall to pieces under the action of its inborn constitutional weakness; for between the different elements that make it up, between them and England, there are no real bonds or common interests, no vital connections, no

¹ *Vide* the letters of Ostwald and Lasson, which all remember.

organic interdependence. Accident and extraordinary combinations of lucky chances have alone brought together the incoherent parts of her vast, unwieldy body, not some definite policy strenuously pursued, or some common principle of organic life. No attempt at welding into one consistent whole the *membra disjecta* of her Empire, whose interests conflict, whose destinies are opposed, can ever prevail against this fundamental vice in structure. Even the most elementary of all forms of union, that of an Imperial Zollverein proposed by Chamberlain, failed to realize itself through the opposition of these divergent forces of individual selfishness and dispersion.¹ The real nature of the British Empire lies, not in a power that makes for centralization, cohesion, unity, the subordination of the individual to collective action, but in a tendency to separation, independence, divergence. The force that works within it tends, not to associated effort but to disintegration.²

Of all England's possessions, India is the most important, and none inspires her with greater pride. None more fully reveals the fundamental weakness of the Empire. The

¹ Th. Schiemann: *Kreuz Zeitung*, July 5, 1911, quoted by Bernhardi, "Deutschland und der nächste Krieg," Ch. V.

² Bernhardi, "Deutschland und der nächste Krieg," Ch. V.

conquest of India is not due, as Englishmen would have us believe, to the genius, the power, the moral superiority of the race, but to the absence of any real opposition on the part of its rivals or the Hindoos, to their impotence. India conquered itself for England's advantage. Only by pitting against each other the races, religions, jealousies, the thousand forces of disunion of that unhappy land, the most utterly divided against itself in existence, the most wholly devoid of any natural unity, did England impose its domination over it, a dominion which only rests upon the weakness of the subject race, not on the strength of the conquering one. That a handful of clerks directing a few regiments of soldiers were thus able to subdue a continent, that a thousand officials should suffice to rule and exploit three hundred million natives, clearly shows the easiness of their task, and the fragility of the fabric they have raised on a hasty rubble of insecure foundations.

But a national consciousness is waking in India, and sedition is silently at work there. Should they find fitting instruments, should some native power arise, what would become of this mere handful of Anglo-Saxon parasites? And besides, India can now hope to find helpers from without. So long as England ruled the seas, no great State could

effectively attack India: a near base indispensable to any military operation was lacking. India's isolation, her remoteness, have defended her more effectually than any armed force. But England's naval supremacy and India's isolation are alike things of the past. Germany, by means of the Bagdad railway, Russia, by means of the rails she has already pushed within striking distance of the frontiers of Afghanistan, now threaten her security.¹ On the loyalty of the rajahs and natives England can no longer rely. They do not realize the sterling benefits of English rule, and her material power exercises no prestige over their imaginations. In the eyes of the races of India, the most profoundly religious and idealistic in the world, a purely materialistic civilization is no civilization at all. And, from a spiritual point of view, what have the English done for spiritual India? ask Karl Bötticher, Dahn, and all the German writers who have studied her. What enduring traces of their presence will they leave in comparison with all the conquerors who scattered broadcast over the land their temples, their mosques and palaces of red sandstone or white marble? They have turned into barracks and stables the fairy fortresses erected by the Moguls, and destroyed for base

¹ Dr. Rohrbach, "Die Bagdadbahn," Berlin, 1911.

utilitarian purposes some of the noblest monuments ever raised by the hand of man ; the emblems of their greatness are railway-stations and barracks, canals and factories built to enrich them out of the sweat and blood of the wretched ryots they exploit and despise ; when their dominion vanishes it will leave behind it no single thing of beauty all mankind could rejoice in, to testify that England's power was noble, humane, and truly great. She was all selfishness, a squanderer of riches, a destroyer of beauty and life. No single real benefit of any kind redeems her crimes ; she will leave behind her, after her inevitable expulsion, neither gratitude, nor regret, nor admiration, nor even respect, nothing but the crushing memory of unnameable oppression and grinding exploitation.

The example of India is a sufficient demonstration of the fragility of England's Empire, which is nothing but a world-wide business concern to further her selfish ends.¹ Need one apply the same analysis to Egypt, handed over to England only by the foolish weakness of French democrats, essentially incapable of any national policy ; to the fortresses which guard the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Straits of Malacca and the

¹ Bernhardi, " Deutschland und der nächste Krieg," Ch. IV.

China seas, the Straits of Magellan, the Cape, all the highways of the world's commerce, some of which she has filched even in times of profound peace?¹ Is it not clear that, by reason of its very size and the enormous length of this chain of islands and strongholds, her Empire can no longer be defended by any fleet, however powerful, against the ever-growing naval strength of her enemies, their ever-growing means of attack, the appearance on the world-stage of new Powers, China, Japan, the United States? To these increasing menaces, to the pressure they exert with ever greater energy, to all these young forces of living and irresistible expansion, what can the frail shell of this incoherent worn-out colossus oppose? And what can avail the shams and the paradox of its empty greatness against these potent Realities? Can it hope to find in the Colonies its children have peopled—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa—defensive resources? They are autonomous, and pursue their own selfish ends; the sentimental tie that binds them to the Mother Country, even were it stronger and fortified by common interests—which, by the way, are non-existent—is too weak; they are too remote, too feeble to give effectual help. From them England can expect none; ex-

¹ Treitschke, "Deutsche Geschichte," vol. v. p. 63.

perience shows they remain deaf to her appeals. Too far removed in space, too vast for their population, they constitute, not a source of strength for England but a surface of easy attack; they will be a source of weakness and not a means of defence when the onrush of her enemies breaks upon her Empire, so soon as the inevitable dismemberment begins. And this is near, for her Empire is slowly sinking under the excess of its own weight; it is already hemmed in by the ravenous hordes whose thirst for blood is daily whetted by the ever-growing symptoms of its hopeless debility, by the ever-growing promise of the bloody splendour of spoil its ruin will bring. In very sooth the day of reckoning is at hand, cry these fanatics; the living lie on which rests the hateful dominance of a race whose vitality is exhausted, whose fortunes wane, whose arrogance has roused the whole world against it, now stands exposed; this insolent sham shall be swept finally away like all shams by the forces of life, truth, reality which it has only too long outraged and whose day of vengeance has come at last.¹ The predestined instrument of this duty of world-healing is Imperial Germany, united in its strength and will; in her these forces now find their highest expression. She will replace

¹ Treitschke.

the disorder, the enervating individualism, the selfishness and falsehood England, her Empire, her whole civilization now represent, by the virgin vigour of her health, and by her Empire, founded on a conception of life and civilization which spells order, perfect organization, subordination, truth, real strength, and welfare for all. She is weary of seeing herself hemmed in on all sides and humiliated by a base, envious, and cunning enemy. The Day, the reckoning Day so long eagerly hoped for by her navy, her whole population, has come at last. Like another Siegfried she will smite this Fafnir who lies sprawling across the surface of the earth, brooding over his hoard of gold. A modern Carthage, more perfidious and permeated by a baser spirit of mercantilism than the Carthage of old and far more hateful than she, so steeped in lies that her very name is a synonym of deceit and hypocrisy, her every act a lie, like her defended by cowardly mercenaries alone, England is ripe for ruin. All her civilization is mere dross, the burnt-out ashes of extinct life; virtue has departed from her. The cup of her iniquity is full to overflowing; gods and men are alike weary of her: *Delenda est*.¹

¹ Long before the war Maximilian Harden continually repeated in his paper, *Die Zukunft*, the invariable refrain, *Ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam*.

And thus Dr. Lenard¹ finds it in him to write these words, which I quote from a pamphlet: "The central nest and supreme stronghold of all hypocrisy upon earth which is on the Thames must be swept away. We cannot respect the tombs of Shakespeare, Newton, and Faraday. There can be no peace with a highwayman so long as he lives or has not been hanged. The fight against this bandit is something more than a fight for the very existence and honour of our Fatherland: it is a crusade to maintain honesty upon the earth."

¹ Professor of Physics at Heidelberg University, one of the signatories of the Appeal of German savants to the world.

IV

PSYCHOLOGICAL VICES OF THESE THEORIES

SUCH are Germany's ideas about England, such the feelings she fosters towards her—and I gloss over some of them—and such her modest claims. To refute these theories were mere waste of time if by so doing we did not unveil the essential defects of the German mind and of these theorizings. German thought seems incapable of working in any but this blind and frenzied way. It starts from unverifiable metaphysical premises, and crashes on through specious distortions of facts, a cloud of specious sophistry and rigorously linked reasonings, to conclusions as absolute as a dogma, as vehement as a fanatic's ravings, so remote in their final results from the reality they claim to reveal, and from which every step in their maniacal logic has farther led them, that no likeness remains between reality and the image they present of it. Germany asserts that she attains the very essence of all things ; and yet she can see only their external and

material aspects, their superficial workings, their common traits, not their distinguishing features; on the spirit of things, on all evasive spiritual realities her brain seems to have no hold. Sympathy, imagination, insight are denied her. She is the prey of rigid mathematical reasoning, which no subtler sense of things, no common sense even, seems ever to moderate. A blind force of metaphysical logic, indifferent to the infinite complexity of life, its apparent disorder, hurries her on to a dead stiff schematic conception which replaces them. "Reflection," writes Mme. de Staël, "which cools the brains of other men, excites the German's," and meditation is a form of intoxication with him and produces like effects. Its fumes disturb his vision; his eyes can see only distorted images that lead him astray. On dead and passive matter, which submits in its unchanging simplicity or definite complexity to the routine of his methods and disciplined thought, his brutal grasp is strong and sure; his brain retains all its clearness in dealing with it; but into the complexities of human nature, infinitely varied in its ever-changing actions and reactions, his psychological insight cannot penetrate: among them his mind gropes, stumbles, and collapses; there is no end to his blunders, to the silly fallacies and incapacities for right-think-

ing he is capable of attaining. A strange blindness makes him wander from one contradictory statement to another. These learned professors, whose books show a complete understanding of England's traditional policy and who most learnedly expound their theory of the rôle the Low Countries play in her history, violate the neutrality of Belgium, sacred in English eyes, and then are astonished that England should protest. These philosophers and theorists on international law, these merchants who know the meaning of a promise and a signature, giddily assert that the solemn obligation they assumed in the eyes of the whole world is a mere "scrap of paper," and are indignant at the indignant protests of other nations. These historians and psychologists, who have pored over the past of every land and all nations, seem incapable of understanding a single reaction of their present life, which is notwithstanding an outcome of their past and their psychology, and is determined by the invariable reactions of all men under certain provocations. Never, in any country, in any period, did persecution and terrorism break the spirit of man; their only result is to scatter the seeds from which spring martyrs and heroes; yet persecution and terrorism are their means of waging war and their system of government; and by the very

excess of their bestial brutality they have transformed peaceful and neutral Belgium into a very incarnation of heroism. The contradictions of their mind are numberless. In their eyes the blood of the Teuton is sacred, its right to independence absolute, yet they oppress their Danish and Flemish brethren ; their own frontiers must not be violated, yet they violate every frontier to the strains of the "Wacht am Rhein," so faithful and strong. Dr. Harnack and all the German savants reproach "Teutonic" England with treason to the holy bond of Germanism and the breach of a promise she never made ; yet their fellow-countrymen keep no definite promise they solemnly entered into. They have treated as mere rubbish all the Hague conventions, all the rules of civilized warfare, and glory in their barbarism ; yet their Kaiser, who in an official proclamation ordered his soldiers to behave like Huns, now protests with sincere indignation against the "barbarousness" of his adversaries, their use, which is a lie, of dum-dum bullets. England's blockade is a crime against all humanity, yet they establish a blockade worthy of pirates and murderers. They reduced Paris by famine, but to starve Germany is an unspeakably monstrous crime.

So constantly distorted a vision of realities can only be explained by some radical defect

in the eye. The German defect is twofold. They substitute for whatever object they look at a distorting theory of the object ; and their theory and distortion are all they see in the object's place. Moreover, in all things they can perceive only the material side, what can be weighed and measured. And thus they are enabled, no doubt, to dominate and organize all material forces ; moral forces, all their meanings and reactions, utterly elude their grasp. Against these forces the materialistic mysticism of these narrow-minded and brutal doctrinaires shatters itself, and all their outlook on life is warped by their failure to recognize the sovereign sway of spiritual realities. And such are the defects of their vision of England, this their error as regards France, Russia, Belgium. On each of these countries they have formulated a theory which grotesquely disguises its true nature ; in each the vital element, which is spiritual, escapes their eyes. Their analysis of England's strength only leaves out one thing, which is the essential one—the moral forces without which no accident, no lucky chance, no conspiracy of other forces can avail. They have counted, weighed, estimated the material causes and results of English greatness, the material facts on which it rests, the weaknesses of England's civilization, which are those of

all modern civilizations. The tremendous will-force which is the soul and creator of her greatness, the spiritual energies that brought it into being and sustain its strength, remain invisible to their purblind vision. And yet these alone are the supreme Reality, the deep life-root of England's civilization and its justification. In comparison with its splendour, what matter its faults and failings, the inevitable inferiorities which are bound up with any vast and complex form of existence? In their sorry, purblind, pedantic, and mechanical conception of life, born of their long political serfdom, of that principle of subordination which makes them mere cogs in a machine, of the discipline imposed on them by their schools, their bureaucracy, their military system, which have sternly taught them order, slavish obedience, thrift, passive and uniform ways of thinking, what room can be found for the rich abundance, the reckless squanderings, the risks, the generous follies, the struggles, the apparent disorder of the vast and various life, fickle and uncertain, which is the life of heroic France, whose history is one long succession of alternate collapses and recoveries? or of England, whose whole sublime existence is one long battle?

V

A REFUTATION OF THESE THEORIES

THESE wiseacres seem to have no inkling of the well-springs of England's life, nor even of its most recent and essential manifestations.

Voltaire informs us in "Candide" that Doctor Pangloss taught metaphysico-theologico-cosmolo-sillyology in the castle of Thunder-ten-Tronck. Now, this castle was the most splendid in all Westphalia, for it possessed a door and windows, and Dr. Pangloss was its oracle. We know what changes time has brought over this needy and barbarous country, and what a "kolossal" fabric has replaced the castle; but the tribe of Dr. Pangloss still teaches there. Their influence and sophistry have grown with the fortunes of their masters. Yet the refutation of the theories they spin out need not detain us long; it is hardly necessary to go back to the Deluge nor invoke the Divine to reveal their weakness. We need only lead these metaphysicians and scholars into the domain of the simplest, most

childish ideas, and contemptuously oppose to their wild dreams a few facts and texts, so elementary in their nature that any schoolboy can grasp them.

They apparently know nothing of the epic of the Will all English history unfolds. They forget the fundamental spiritual reality of the three last English centuries, namely, Puritanism and its outcome. These mighty theorists of the evolution and inner developments of nations have never realized how the English people has gradually changed and acquired all the characteristics which make for action and dominance, all the forces of disciplined co-operation, which bring success ; how " Merrie England " of holt and field has become the vast industrial, commercial, and colonial Empire whose astounding growth has never been paralleled before ; nor can they see that the forces behind her greatness are spiritual rather than material. England's example is a lesson in energy. Rome herself teaches less effectually that character, will, the individual worth they despise, far more than intellectual gifts, scientific achievements, organization imposed by the will of a master, or than luck give nations power. The depressing monotony of Puritan life, its mechanical conformity to sectarian ideas, the spiritual restraints which have darkened the English outlook,

narrowed all minds by unceasingly directing them to immediate and practical duties, to the contemplation of things eternal and the terrors of hell, have doubtless increased England's insularity and sown the seeds of hypocrisy; but they have strengthened the moral fibre of the race and its inner life, have comforted its heart and bestowed on it breathing spaces in its toil. It is no small thing that the gloomy Puritan Sunday should have given this nation of artisans a periodical day of rest long before other nations adopted it. One has only to glance over the popular expressions of this Puritanism in English literature to gauge the depth of this influence; they constitute one long sermon on the duty of strenuous effort and efficient action, resignation, courage, hope, and are in sooth a gospel of everyday life for the whole race. They are a true witness, and their testimony who runs may read. Certain lines of Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," his "Village Blacksmith," might be taken as the watchwords of the English in the struggle for existence.¹ He is a true descendant of those Pilgrim Fathers who founded beyond the seas a New England in

¹ Let us then be up and doing
 With a heart for any fate:
 Still achieving, still pursuing
 Learn to labour and to wait.

—*A Psalm of Life.*

which all the moral virtues, all the earnestness, all the love of action inherent in the Anglo-Saxon race have attained their greatest material splendour and their final expression. A nation that brings forth such children cannot be a sham. The very existence of the United States and of the English Colonies is a peremptory reply to these German slanders. Their growth, like these lines, like all this literary output, explains how a religious belief, a gospel of conduct, can reconcile the pursuit of the benefits of this life and concern for the life to come, can give its disciples the possession, not only of this world but of the next, a monopoly of salvation and of Trusts. Its literature has taught the earnest, religious, and practical soul of England sublime, inspiring lessons of resolution and heroic endurance. Read again Milton's sonnet on the massacre of the Vaudois, 'on his blindness, Satan's discourses in "Paradise Lost," Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty," these lines of Tennyson, written yesterday, and which every English schoolboy knows by heart:—

As tho' to breathe were life . . .

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.¹

¹ Tennyson, "Ulysses."

Where else can such words be found? And can the race which uttered them, and yet follows their teachings, have lost its virtue? Is it possible to deny the influence exerted by this perpetual glorification of the life of the soul, of self-reliance, by this profound belief in personal responsibility and the duty towards oneself, by the manly pride which teaches every man he needs no outside support, no collective organization, no imposed discipline, no praise or encouragement from without to stand boldly on his own feet, work out his own fate, and carry through his appointed task, for his conscience is a sufficient stay, even if he stands alone in the wide world and none sees his struggles but himself? The soul of Milton's archangel, "a mind not to be changed by place or time," which "is its own place, and in itself Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven," is to this day the soul of England, and the first, the noblest expression of that "obdurate pride," "the unconquerable will, the courage never to submit or yield," of which she has given so many proofs in the past, of which she now gives the crowning example, for her soul remains unchanged.

One other popular classic of world-wide fame, known to every child, "Robinson Crusoe," reveals other sides of England's nature; and if German critics would condescend

to come down from their metaphysical heights and gaze on such lowly realities, they might realize the deep significance and social import of this little book, a mere tale for children some think, and yet capable of inspiring the profoundest musings in the brain of a philosopher or sociologist, and endless reflections, for none casts a more vivid light on the psychology of the race, nor more clearly explains its material prosperity. All the secrets of English colonial success are hidden in this romance: the indomitable patience, the ant-like tenacity no failure can discourage, the stolid determination, the solitary hardihood of the emigrants, the pioneers, the squatters, inspired by two apparently contradictory passions, the love of home and the passion for adventure, who have built up in the wildernesses of America, Australia, and South Africa a civilization and their home. What Defoe describes is in essence the tiny English cell which in all lands, under all circumstances, stimulated by the hidden impulses of life within, re-creates England everywhere, and, like a seed, reproduces the plant that scattered it. The roots of its strength are in its Faith, and they draw their nourishment from that extraordinary book, the Bible, whose fortune in England has been so startling, and whose influence on the destinies of the race all recog-

nize. Three times a day does Robinson read the Scriptures, and the struggle he wages against the forces of Nature he pursues against the workings of his soul; he seeks to conquer, transform, improve, and fill with peace the earth and his heart; and thus he fits himself out for his predestined task, that of his race, which is to "reclaim, to people, to organize, and civilize continents" (Taine). And in this task the whole race finally recognizes its sacred mission, the imperious mandate of Eternal God, to administer His affairs on the earth; and thus do its interests become one with its faith, its religious aspirations one with its earthly ambitions, its duty one with its advantage; and England necessarily tends to the magnificent arrogance which inspires the English national hymn, "Rule, Britannia!" Kipling's "Recessional," and "White Man's Burden," all the expressions of Imperial pride and lust for power which ring through the spacious centuries of England's greatness—a conception which leads her straight to the Boer War, to the unconscious hypocrisy some will call it, the heroic civilizing mission others say, which makes her the strange and splendid, the sublime and disconcerting historical reality she has become, and against which all Germany revolts. For Germany cannot understand the extraordinary mingling of practical and re-

ligious impulses, in turn pitilessly realistic and profoundly mystical, at once selfish and disinterested, which inspire the soul of a Cromwell or a Cecil Rhodes ; they remain a sealed book to other races, which in the simplicity of their analysis denounce them as hypocrites pure and simple. A civilization which brings forth such sons is in its essence moral and Puritanic, and the practical and matter-of-fact Puritanic spirit leavens its whole substance ; its influence is all-permeating ; it inspires not only the epic of the race Kipling has sung, but developments apparently the most remote from morality and utility, beauty, æsthetics, which in Ruskin's works are purely Protestant and practical, are destined to labour in the cause of social improvement and moral progress, are no longer an end in themselves, but a handmaiden of Life. The complexity and various issues of this spirit are infinite. The summary condemnations and hard-and-fast definitions Germany applies to its manifestations are sheer nonsense. Possibly we may intensely dislike the type of society produced by this puritanic and individualistic conception of life, but it were blindness to deny the grandeur of the principle which brought it into being and yet maintains its vitality.

For the England it has created is living yet. The life-forces which shaped her destinies, the

long ancestral dreams yet hold sway in spite of all changes, all diminutions in her religious, political, social beliefs, the decay inevitable in an organism which has outgrown itself and is stifled by excess of mass. Moral habits of such antiquity, such depth, such wide-reaching intensities, cannot be effaced in a day; they have become part and parcel of the very substance of the race. The old watchwords yet ring out as clear as in old days; England yet thrills to the calls of her past, and the hearts of her children yet beat in response to them; the life-blood of her veins stirs and seethes when the words of command once more ring out of the depths of her past and her soul; she yet listens to the voices which called forth her greatness from the void. And some of these words are potent not only over England, but over all men; the world has heard no nobler ones. The last utterances of Scott in that final solitary agony among the ice-bound fields of the South Pole, those of Oates, that English gentleman who so quietly gave up life to help his frozen companions in distress, thrilled every human heart, exalted and magnified man's very conception of himself. And this loyalty to the virile ideal of the race endures yet. The dead grey cables which run through the primeval slime of the ocean, binding the Motherland to her distant dominions, thrilled

to the messages they bore her from her children: "When England is at war, Canada is at war"; "To her last shilling and her last man Australia will support the cause of the Empire." And her sons throng to her from Canada, Australia, from the remotest regions of the earth, and their bearing testifies they are her children still, in spite of Germany's denial, and the bond Germany thought broken is stronger than ever. Not for the Motherland alone do they lay down their lives, but for the heritage they hold from her, and which, like her, is threatened, the traditions of liberty, equal justice, self-government, democracy, which she gave them with their blood, and which are living in every drop that courses through their veins; they are the creation of their race, its contribution to civilization; and never was contribution more precious, nobler, worthier to be defended at the cost of any sacrifice, at the cost of life itself. And the feelings that draw them to England's side, feelings Germany despises because in her blindness she cannot see their force, nor produce the like, nor in her slavish subservience even conceive them, are a living, an undying force; the ideal they correspond to is one of the final aims of all mankind; vaguely, almost unconsciously, it stirs within the souls of the colonists, settlers, labourers, artisans, traders,

who flock from Canada or lands beneath the Southern Cross. It is for the immaterial ideal of their race, not for its material aggrandizement, they come to battle; not for a base commercialism, the selfish exploitation of the earth, but for the free expansion of all life in security and peace, for a loftier form of peaceful human progress which sets Right above Might, and will bow to the tyranny of no man. It is for these principles of impartial justice, for a government manly and honest, even if at times harsh, that the Hindoos whose revolt Germany predicted are now fighting and give their life-blood. England's soldiers are no mercenaries, but volunteers in the deepest sense of the word. The magnetic impulse of their common ideal groups them all in masses which may possibly fail to attain the dead perfection, the cohesion, the density, and discipline of the enormous German death-dealing machine; but the principle that underlies their individualistic ordering is a living one, and in modern warfare is more efficient far than any machinery. Not against forces that can be measured or weighed is Germany arrayed; these she has numbered and estimated; but against those imponderable spiritual forces which even Bismarck finally acknowledged rule the world; against them all mere brutal force has ever shattered itself

and ever will. Such forces are no mere lies, no dead shams; they are the only true Realities, the supreme forces of Life. A country which still possesses them is not effete, and the days of England are not yet numbered. Germany it is whose fate lies quivering in the scales, for she has denied their existence and their power. When these realities meet Germany's so-called theoretical and metaphysical realities, born of the pedantic and purblind infatuation of her narrow-minded logicians, of the monstrous and foolish vanity of her doctrinaires, they will sweep them out of existence like the empty ghosts they are. Germany's dreams of universal dominance are the nightmare of a sick and demented mind. Two words defined them long ago—*Ægri somnia*.

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